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The theory of baptism

THE THEORY OF BAPTISM.

THE

REGENERATION OF INFANTS

IN

BAPTISM

VINDICATED ON THE TESTIMONY

OF

HOLY SCRIPTURE, CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITY,

AND

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY THE REV.

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INTRODUCTION.

My object in this volume is, to furnish an original Treatise on Baptism,—succinct, yet sufficient; divested of pedantry, yet containing all the necessary knowledge; and fearlessly expressing opinions, without degenerating into the bitterness of controversy.

I believe, that all essential principles are within the reach of human discovery; that all essential questions are simple; and that religion, with all its mysteries, conceals nothing from man which it is for his good to know: and believing, as the result of all, that truth is always attainable by sincerity, I offer this Theory of Baptism.

Works on Baptism are known to have occupied the intelligence of some among the earliest teachers of the Church, to have been among the labours of their ablest successors, and to have taken a conspicuous place in the controversial writings of the Reformation. Valuable performances are still produced from

time to time on the subject; but, in our day, they have been chiefly limited to portions of the general doctrine. My present purpose is, to give that doctrine entire; and, showing the consistency of its features, and the ground of their connexion, the origin of its principles, and the importance of their practice, to supply the Protestant with a Manual of Baptism.

I need scarcely say, that no doctrine can be of higher importance, for none more directly combines spiritual effect with practical necessity. Extinguish Baptism, and we unchristianize Christianity; impair it, and we insult religion; leave it to the caprice of the heretic, and we shall soon see it at the mercy of the infidel.

The sudden rise of dissension on this subject demands the utmost vigilance of the Church. In our feverish time, a touch turns into a distemper. The present disputes may partially subside, but the ground stripped by the feet of the combatants will not soon recover its vegetation; it may much more probably turn into a morass, swelled and deepened by many a contribution of evil, and supply a long course of contagion. There never was a doctrinal dispute, which, in so short a period, exhibited a larger variety of the shapes of error, a more helpless confusion of principles, more daring assumptions, or more pusillanimous evasions. No controversy of England will add a more repulsive chapter to the Ecclesiastical annals of our time.

It may justly be supposed, that I have no intention of questioning the authority of the Tribunal: and I have as little intention of testing its character. I make no inquiry into the circumstances of its origin; and certainly have no desire to plunge into that mass of motives, which, in every instance, enwrap and encumber, and often ferment and fester round, the chief acts of public power. But, there are objections to a Mixed Tribunal, in the nature of things.

Without denying that it may have the due feeling for spiritual difficulties; that it may acquire the due knowledge for spiritual questions; that it may exhibit the due impartiality in the midst of conflicting interests; and may apply itself to its repulsive task with a zeal which scorns to turn Law into a formality, and leave decision behind; still, the constitution of such a Tribunal places the Church in difficulty. Standing before that court, it loses a privilege conceded to the lowest condition of defence; it cannot challenge its jury. The time may thus come, in the possibilities of the future, when a Mixed Tribunal may be the very last to which, with safety of conscience, or in the exercise of a sound discretion, the Church would submit its cause; when it might see a Socinian deciding on a Trinitarian doctrine,—a Presbyterian on Episcopacy,—an Independent on Church discipline,—or an avowed unbeliever on the whole system of Revelation.

If we are told, that this is but like a trial before the Bench in Westminster Hall; our answer is, that the judges are men trained to jurisprudence; that they have a professional character to maintain, and a professional penalty to fear; that they cannot escape from the results of error, or throw up their responsibility with their commission. The inherent evil of all temporary judicatures is their intangible nature: while retribution attempts to grasp them, they are gone: public opinion, the Nemesis of our day, has no wings to follow a phantom.

I now give in outline the Judgment of the Judicial Committee.

"The doctrine held by Mr. Gorham appears to us to be this. That Baptism is a Sacrament generally necessary to salvation; but, that the grace of Regeneration does *not so necessarily* accompany the act of Baptism that Regeneration *invariably* takes place in Baptism; that the grace may be granted *before*, *in*, or *after* Baptism; that Baptism is an effectual sign of grace, by which God works invisibly in us, but only in such as worthily receive it, in them alone it has a wholesome effect: and that, without reference to the qualification of the recipient, it is not in itself an effectual sign of grace: that infants baptized, and dying before actual sin, are certainly saved; but that in no case is Regeneration in Baptism unconditional.

"This question must be decided by the Articles and the Liturgy, without reference to the supposed opinions of their authors, or their supposed tendencies to Calvinistic or Arminian doctrines. As we now have them, they must be considered as the final result of the discussion which took place.

"The Church having resolved to frame Articles of faith, as a means of avoiding diversities of opinion, and establishing consent touching true religion, must be presumed to have decided such of the questions then under discussion as it was thought practicable to decide. But it could not have intended to attempt the determination of all the questions which had arisen, or might arise; other points and questions being left for future decision by competent authority; and, in the mean time, to the private judgment of pious and conscientious persons."

The Judgment, in the first instance, adverts to the Articles alone.—"The Articles drawn up in 1536, distinctly affirm infant regeneration. In the Book, called 'A necessary Erudition for any Christian Man,' or the 'King's Book,' printed in 1543, infant salvation by Baptism is affirmed. But the Articles of 1552 and 1562 express the necessity of receiving Baptism *rightly;* and the latter express, with respect to infants, that their Baptism is to be retained, as most agreeable to the Church."

The Judgment then adverts to the Prayer Book, of which it says, that "there are parts of it which are

strictly dogmatical, declaring what is to *be believed, or not doubted.*" "Those parts which are in their nature dogmatical must be considered as *declaratory of doctrine.*"

"The Judgment does not decide on the soundness or unsoundness of the doctrines. Its duty extends only to the consideration of that which is by law established to be the doctrine of the Church of England, on the true and legal construction of her Articles and Formularies."

The opinions of various old leading divines, supposed to resemble Mr. Gorham's, are considered as showing "at least the liberty which has been allowed in maintaining such doctrine."

The Report ends with stating, that "the sentence passed in the Arches Court ought to be reversed; and that the Bishop of Exeter had not shown sufficient cause, why he did not institute Mr. Gorham."

This decision has been objected to by a large portion of the Church. The first point which may occur to the observer, is the remarkable ease with which the appellant seems to have established his own sense of the Articles. The first rule of all argument is, that where two statements of a law exist, differing in clearness, the clearer is to be taken as the interpreter of the more obscure. On the doctrine of Regeneration, the Church has two such statements; that of the Baptismal Service,

the most direct, distinct, and unquestionable, which can be expressed in language. In that service, the regeneration of the infant is first prayed for as a Divine blessing; on his Baptism it is declared that "this infant is regenerated;" and the Service closes with a repetition of the assurance, and a thanksgiving for the blessing. Nothing can be more palpably unequivocal than this proof of the mind of the Church. But the language of the Articles is less clear (it shall be subsequently shown that it is equally unequivocal); and this comparative obscurity is to be adopted as the interpreter of the clear! Such is the logic; we shall now see the authority.

The appellant proposes the Articles as his authority, and pronounces them to be "*precise and dogmatical.*" They are neither. It may be only a matter of astonishment how any man, acquainted with their history, or who had ever even glanced over their contents, could hope to impress such an opinion.

The Thirty-nine Articles are the very reverse of "precise and dogmatical." They are Articles of comprehension; in the phrase of their day, Articles of peace; drawn up and prepared for general acceptance; and, for that purpose, made as *general as possible.*

There are two ways of settling controversy: one by exhausting the argument, and the other by silencing the arguers. The latter was the way taken

by James the First, and this was notoriously the meaning of the title prefixed to the Articles: "Agreed on, for avoiding all diversities of opinions, and for establishing of consent." The Judgment misconceives this title. The royal road to universal consent was simply, by forbidding to *differ*.

I now refer to Burnet's opinion on the Articles. After alluding to the royal mode of settling controversy, he gives us his own two conclusions from their history.

The one is, "that the subscription does import an assent to the Article;" and the other, that an Article, "being conceived in such *general words*, that it can admit of different literal and grammatical senses, both sides may subscribe to the Article, with a good conscience, and without any equivocation."

Nothing can be wider than a comprehension, which thus takes in *both sides* at once. He then gives an example of three meanings in one Article, all separate, and yet all, as he conceives, allowable.

"The Third Article, concerning Christ's descent into Hell, is capable of three different senses; and all the three are both literal and grammatical. The first is, that Christ descended locally into Hell, and preached to the spirits there in prison. A second sense of which that Article is capable, is, that by Hell is meant the grave, according to the signification of the word in the Hebrew. A third sense is, that by Hell, according to the signification of the

Greek word, is meant the place or region of spirits separated from their bodies.

Burnet then observes, that "all those senses differ very much from one another, and yet they are all senses that are literal and grammatical; so that, in which of those senses soever a man conceives the Article, he may subscribe it, and he does no way prevaricate in so doing." The Articles are for *peace*.

"If men would therefore understand all *the other* Articles in the *same largeness*, and with the same equity, there would not be that occasion given for unjust censure that there has been. Where, then, the Articles are conceived in large and general words, and have not special and restrained terms in them, we ought to take that for a sure indication, that the Church does not intend to tie up men too severely to particular opinions; but that she leaves all to such a liberty as is agreeable with the purity of the faith; and this seems sufficient to explain the title of the Articles, and the subscriptions that are required of the Clergy to them."

There can be no question, that, in the opinion of this recognized interpreter of the Articles, and justly received authority,—for Burnet was a very able, and, what is more to the purpose, a very honest man,—the Articles were simply a general declaration of doctrine, extending to the utmost stretch of rational comprehension, and extending, for the sake—not of establishing *dogmas*, but of appeasing controversy.

Paley, the later authority, who, though not infallible, retains the weight of a man of capacity, and of especial learning on the subject, speaks almost with contempt, of imagining the Articles to be any other than Articles of generalization.

"Those who contend that nothing less can justify subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them, must suppose that the legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, in perpetual succession, not to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds."

He then proceeds to state the actual intents of the legislature. "They intended to exclude from offices in the Church—1. all abetters of Popery: 2. *Anabaptists*, who were at that time a powerful party on the continent: 3. the Puritans, who were hostile to the Episcopal constitution; and in general, the members of such leading sects, or foreign establishments, as threatened to overthrow our own."

All this is palpably opposed to the assertion; that the Articles are "*precise* and *dogmatical*."

Paley, in adverting to the practical subterfuge, which may be sought for in the later laxity of discipline, lays down the obvious law of the case. "The inquiry concerning subscription, is 'quis imposuit?' and 'quo animo?'

"The Bishop who receives the subscription, is *not* the imposer; any more than the clerk of the

court, who administers the oath to the jury and witnesses, is the person who imposes it: nor, consequently, is the private opinion or interpretation of the Bishop of any signification to the subscriber, one way or other.

Of the drawers-up of the Articles, whose private opinions we are now so zealously urged to examine, for the purpose of diluting their public declarations; Paley says, "The Compilers of the Thirty-nine Articles are not to be considered as the imposers of subscription, any more than the framer or drawer-up of a law is the person who enacts it. The legislature of the 13th of Elizabeth is the imposer, whose intention the subscriber is bound to *satisfy*[1]."

If there are clergymen who omit, in the Baptismal Service, those parts in which Infant Regeneration is pronounced, it shows their consciousness of offence; but it also shows the necessity for discipline. The Church, without desiring to deprive any man of his liberty of opinion, must demand the performance of his pledge. When the pledge has become irksome to the individual, why not throw up charge? When the principle is changed, why retain the profession? Why continue liable to a writhe of conscience in every reading of the Liturgy, and expose himself to those stings, which are not the less severe for being secret; and which,

[1] Moral Philosophy.

however an affected courage may hide them from the world, defy all the power of craft to heal?

If fears are felt, that the withdrawal of all who are thus tainted would weaken the Church, the fear is groundless. The strength of the Church is in its sincerity. The relief of its incumbrance would be only an increase of its vigour; the amputation of the decayed limb would give new health to the frame. What the Establishment lost in numbers, it would gain in the most important of all possessions—character. Even those who withdrew would gain in character; the pardon, which we must now refuse to their tergiversation, we might then give to their independence.

If falsehood is proverbially vile, equivocation is viler still: falsehood may originate in error, but equivocation always sins with knowledge. Falsehood, by its abruptness, rouses the camp; equivocation tries to plant a traitor there. Falsehood puts the understanding to the test; the business of equivocation is to make the understanding a fellow-conspirator. If it were the purpose of a man to spend an ignoble life, and close it by a distracted deathbed, it would be impossible to take a surer course, than to assert through life what he denied in his heart, and finally attempt to cover his character by a burst of equivocation.

Calvinism rejects infant regeneration, on the most obscure of all grounds,—that "Baptism is a sign only

to the *elect*," of whose election man can know nothing, and God reveals nothing. It is thus that contradiction in terms, a sign without a signification; yet, laborious efforts have been lately made to entangle the Church in the imputation of Calvinism. To this the simplest answer is the best; and it is to be found in the simplest contrast of their principles. Calvinism declares,

"That Christ did *not* die for all, but only for the *elect*.

"That God created the greater part of men for *damnation*.

"That the elect *cannot* lose their faith, nor lose the Holy Ghost, nor be *damned*, however they may sin.

"That all who are not elect are *necessarily* damned."

In his Institutes Calvin states, that all who fail of salvation have been *created* under sentence of *eternal ruin*: that "Almighty God created them for shame in life, and for ruin in death.

"That they are, from their mother's womb, devoted to *inevitable destruction*.

"How comes it to pass," he asks "that the fall of Adam has involved so many nations, with their *infants*, irremediably, in *everlasting ruin?* How, but that it *pleased God*. A horrible decree, I acknowledge. But no one can deny that God foreknew what would be the end of man, before He created him; and He foreknew it because He *fore-ordained* it." This is the language of a maniac, not of a theologian.

"Predestination," says Calvin, "is the eternal decree of God, by which He determined what He would do with every man. For all men are *not* created on *equal terms;* but to some of them eternal life is *pre-ordained*, and to others *eternal condemnation.* Therefore, accordingly as a person is *created for one or other* of those two ends, so, I affirm, he is predestined to either life or *death*[2]."

To give the deepest colouring to this picture of horrors, he tells us, that "those who are called to a state of salvation are *few*, compared with those who are left in a *state of perdition.*" He then closes by the representation of the Divine grace abandoning the world, and finishing the great scene of Providential government in universal agony and ruin. "The grace of God does *not* rescue many from eternal death. It leaves the world in that *perdition* to which it is doomed."

Men *created* to be condemned! What becomes of justice? what, of mercy? In this single sentence they perish together.

What but fanaticism or fatuity could have ever constructed this desperate creed; or what stronger contrast can be offered than the doctrines of Scripture.

"That God is *love;* that He *willeth* not the death of a sinner; that, in his love, He sent his only-

[2] Instit. iii. 21, &c. De Prædest. 607, &c.

begotten Son to *redeem* the world; that He calls on *all men every where* to repent; that Christ died for *all;* that He will cast out *no one* who comes to Him; that He commands *all men* to work out their *own salvation* with fear and trembling, *for* it is *God that worketh in them*, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure."

Those doctrines of Scripture are the doctrines of the Church of England. What was the contemptuous rejection of the Lambeth Articles?

Calvinism is as irrational in the conduct of its argument, as startling to humanity in the whole spirit of its conclusions. The natural rule of reason is, to argue from what we know to what we have to learn. Calvinism takes the directly opposite course. Free-agency is an instinct of man: of Free-agency we therefore know something. Prescience is an attribute of God: of Prescience man knows *nothing.* Yet, Calvinism argues, as if it had perfect knowledge of Prescience, and as if Free-agency had never existed.—Can we be surprised at its cruelty, or its crudity; that where it is not atrocious, it is absurd?

Of the Judicial Council I feel every inclination to speak with deference. But, the discovery of truth is a duty of every man; and, as wrong premises naturally produce wrong conclusions, it appears to

me, that this tribunal has assumed *wrong premises* in at least seven prominent instances.

1. That the Articles are "precise and dogmatical."

This, it has been already shown, they are *not*, never were, and never were *intended* to be.

2. That the Baptismal Service is dependent on the construction of the Articles.

But the Baptismal Service is some centuries older than the Articles; has derived no authority from them; has been always used by the people without reference to them; would be so used, if the Articles were swept away by a stroke of the pen; and is direct, practical, and decisive, where the Articles are *intentionally* theoretical, general, and indecisive.

3. That the earnestness of the prayers for regeneration in the Baptismal Service necessarily implies a doubt of the regeneration.

But prayer is not necessarily *doubt*. In the Divine summary of supplication, the Lord's Prayer, there is *no* doubt;—the reverence to God's name, the coming of his kingdom, the forgiveness of our trespasses on the condition of our forgiving those of others, are not matters of doubt.

What *knowledge* can man give to Omniscience? Yet, we are commanded to pray for all things. It is by the Divine beneficence alone, that the infant lives to receive baptism; though, to suppose baptism and regeneration capable of being disunited, we must

suppose, not the denial of a Divine mercy, but the violation of a Divine promise. Prayer can teach nothing to God; its chief purpose is, to teach our spiritual wants to ourselves: humility and homage are the true operation of prayer.

4. That the opinions of distinguished members of the Establishment in other ages, not differing from those of the appellant, having been maintained without public censure or reproach, proves, at least, the liberty which has been allowed in maintaining such doctrines (apparently implying, that doctrines, which have passed without censure or reproach in one age, ought to pass free in all others).

But, to this there are evident objections:—the practical evil of a doctrine may have been unobserved in the beginning;—laxity of discipline may have been less dangerous in the past than in the present;—opinions scattered through books are different in point of danger from opinions pressed on the belief of the people;—the speculations of the study may be overlooked, where the practices of the pulpit must be restricted. After all, the true question is, Are those opinions dangerous *now?* Moral distempers undeniably change their nature from age to age. If the slight disorder of one period is envenomed into the *epidemic* of another, who can doubt the wisdom of changing the regimen, of burying the *fomes* of the contagion, and, in case of extremity, establishing the *cordon.*

5. That infants are baptized, not because by their innocence they *cannot be* unworthy recipients, but because they make promises by their sureties, which, when they come of age, they are bound to perform.

This is a chief argument of all who oppose infant regeneration, but is an obvious fallacy. There is no doubt of the antiquity of Christian sponsorship, of its value as securing, in some degree, personal friends for the infant; and of its giving, in general, publicity and public respect to Baptism. This explanation is also assigned by the Church as a source of the infant's pledge.

But we have to do with the facts. The Church does not regard sponsorship as *essential*, for it requires *none* in private baptism. And, from the nature of things, an unconscious infant *cannot* give a pledge of any kind. The sponsor has no power, and therefore can incur no actual pledge: what man can be answerable for the morality of another, twenty years hence? As an institution, sponsorship is excellent; but, as a bond, its performance must be wholly dependent on contingency.

The error arises from overlooking the distinction between things tangible and intangible. In property, an infant may be laid under a pledge, which he must eventually perform, or pay the penalty; but in mind, a pledge is a form where no penalty can be inflicted, and, of course, no *obligation* can be imposed. Thus,

in private baptism the reason does not exist, and in public baptism it is inapplicable.

6. That there are portions of the Liturgy which cannot be construed truly without reference to the faith, hope, and charity, conceived in the Articles. "And in proof thereof, the conclusive instance is the Burial Service, in which a hope is expressed, that God has taken the dead to Himself," be they what they may.

The instance is singularly unfortunate, for it is utterly the reverse of conclusive. Who can decide on the future condition of any man? Who can know what influence the Holy Spirit may exert on the mind, in the last moments? If the multitude, who saw only the writhings of the dying thief on the cross, had pronounced him undone, would they have been in the right? And *may* not his acceptance have been revealed to the world, in part, to warn us against rash and harsh judgments? Hope is the *only* language of man's ignorance, in the presence of God's mercy.

It should also be remembered, that the Church does not read this Service over the unbaptized, the excommunicated, or the suicide.

7. That, in declaring the right of the appellant to institution, the Judgment merely proposes to settle a matter of discipline, without touching on a matter of doctrine.

But, the question originates in doctrine; the appel-

lant is stopped by his ecclesiastical superior, on doctrine; a penalty is inflicted, on the ground of doctrine; and the sentence releases him from the penalty. May not this affect the tenure of the doctrine in his own instance, and in that of all who shall be inclined to follow him?

The premises of other reasoners may be still more succinctly disposed of. It is thus argued from James i. 18, and 1 John v. 1:

"That Regeneration may be obtained *without* Baptism."

But, in those texts there is no denial of baptism; and our Lord, in declaring that regeneration is essential, also declares that Regeneration *is*, being "born of water and of the Spirit."

"That the Articles do not define Regeneration."

No definition can be *necessary*, where a positive fact is declared, and a positive command is enjoined. But the Articles *do* give all the definition that we can desire. The Twenty-seventh Article defines Regeneration to be a thing "whereby, as by an instrument, 1. the receivers are grafted into the Church; 2. the promises of the forgiveness of sin are visibly sealed; 3. our adoption to be the sons of God is also visibly sealed; 4. Faith is confirmed; 5. Grace is increased by virtue of prayer." Those are great gifts, and those the Article describes unhesitatingly as included in Regeneration.

I shall not waste time on the transparent evasion,

that *no* injury to Baptism is done, whatever may be the declared tenets of the administrator; as it must equally convey Regeneration.

If disbelief in the words of the Service is sanctioned in the mind of the priest, how long will belief be retained in the mind of the people? If Regeneration is once to be held as a mere chance, how long will Baptism be practised, even as a ceremonial? It is already one of the *tasks* of the Clergy, to bring the population to the font. Peasant indolence and sectarian example withhold thousands from Baptism. Must not Christianity deprecate the prospect of Law as an auxiliary to either? or, is there no higher fear to be felt, in reducing a sacrament to a form?

The "Judgment of Charity," as it is called, is a conjecture, adopted for an escape from the enormity of denying Regeneration to the whole infant world.

What has Charity to do with Law? Or, if Regeneration is not joined with Baptism in *all* instances, where can be the *proof* that it is joined in any? Or, if they are not simultaneous in all, who can prove the case which forms the exception? Or who can point out the *difference* between two infants a week old? Or, if we are to be told, that God sees the difference, where is the revelation? When Scripture offers no test, nature none, and common sense none, how can conjecture decide?

But the logic of this pretence is as trifling as its theology. It professes to *hope*, what it refuses to

believe; it bids us suppose, what it labours to deny; and it recommends the Church to receive, on the ground of charity, what itself rejects on the hypothesis of Calvinism.

The true danger of our day is the restlessness of opinion. The "right of private judgment" is the charter of Protestantism; but the bustle of obscure petulance, the rashness of ignorance, or the mere vanity of being notorious for the mischief, which the meanest faculties have the power to inflict on the community; have often created mighty evils, even in the firm-set and guarded mind of England.

The real object of dread ought to be the possibility of addition to the mass of Schism, which already overlays and corrupts so large a portion of the spiritual fertility of England. Every sect finds a reception in our day; every dreamer can find an audience for his rhapsodies; every rambling performer on popular credulity can "do great wonders, and make fire come down from Heaven on the earth, in the sight of men[3]."

But, the charge is against those who exercise *no* judgment, and who fling out opinions with no more consideration of their danger, than the rustic who sets a forest on fire, in the preparation of his meal; and then retires to the next hillock to keep out of the

[3] Apoc. xiii.

hazard, and amuse himself with the curl of the smoke as it rises above the conflagration.

Of all the perils of religion, the most perilous is Schism. He, whose parting prayer was, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, *that they may be one*, even as we are," well knew and solemnly marked the guilt of Schism. Schism produces leadership,—"I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos,"—and with it all the party spirit and vulgar virulence of leadership. Schism dips the Gospel itself in the passions, makes religion an instrument, and covers the truths of immortality with the dross and dust of the hour. Intoxicating the low by the temptation of power, and the ignorant by the affectation of knowledge; like intoxication, it leaves both bewildered. Schism divides fellow Christians from the common cause, exhausts the means of the Church in self-defence, and turns the milk from the bosom of the great mother into gall in the lips of her children: it diminishes her ranks, narrows her sphere of usefulness, and, under pretence of public spirit and piety, calls in the intriguer and the infidel for her overthrow.

Man has the right of Schism; but it is only as he has the right of any other frenzy of self-will,—as he has the right of blinding himself, or the right of suicide. England exhibits at this moment thirty-five sects, all frowning at each other; and two millions of sectaries, ninety-nine hundredths of whom know

nothing—but that they are bound to break down the Church.

It is here that the Establishment should labour. The consecration of Churches and the building of Schools have their value, but the reclaiming of men is a more comprehensive and a more necessary achievement. It is here that she should run her walls into the waters, recover the soil from barrenness, and shut out the sullen flux and reflux of the surge. Nothing is more surprising to the reader of Sectarian annals, than the hasty grounds on which heresy fixes its secession, except the ease with which its pretexts might be swept from under it. This task ought to be the work of the Establishment. With sixteen thousand educated Clergy; with at least four Universities, which have not yet gauged their religion by their revenue, and begun to calculate on the profits of refusing to acknowledge a God; and with an old and noble genealogy of public services, a rich and proud blazon of championship for all the great interests of the people; the Establishment has means of rectifying the balance of the public mind, unequalled in the world.

Coercion is a word unknown to Christianity. Religion uses but one weapon, but that is from the armoury of Heaven—reason: and that weapon the Church must vigorously use, and use it without delay. I have no desire to echo the alarms which are now actually ringing round us, from hour to

hour. But action is necessary. *Every* Cathedral should at once be modelled into a college. There are nearly thirty Chapters in England. Why should not those be converted into the towers, from which ardent, intelligent, and indefatigable men kept watch over the land; cities on hills, conspicuous to every eye round the horizon; beacons, summoning the whole slumbering defence of Christianity.

We ought to see the whole accomplished energy of the Church turned to the duty of extinguishing Sectarian error; a selection of all the ablest Clergy in every diocese, appointed for the express purpose of combating the prejudices, follies, and fictions which distract the understanding, inflame the irritations, and alienate the patriotism of the people; a standing body of defenders of the Truth, a Council of Christian advocacy, constantly employing their pens in instructing the general mind on all the great disputed questions of religion; in arousing the people to a sense of the wisdom, which in every condition of this wilderness of the world God offers them for the gathering, like the manna of the Israelite; and in relieving Sectarianism itself of the manacles which artifice and indolence, faction and fatuity, have alike rivetted on its understanding. If this were done, there would be an end to heresy in England. We should require no costly drainage of the intellectual soil; we should have no educational contests; the operation would be wrought by the purified atmosphere and broad radiance of the ascending day.

Something of this order must be done, and quickly done. The most precious gift of God is religious truth, and He never gave it to be disguised by the arts, indulge the imposture, or be suffered to perish by the negligence of man. In England we may dread no popular violence, but death has many an instrument. The malaria is deadlier than the hurricane.

The view of Infant Regeneration, which seems to me demonstrative, results from the acknowledged connexion between the Jewish and Christian revelations. As this view will be found at some length in the latter part of the volume, I shall here give but its principal features.

Two great changes of man are *necessary* for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The body must rise again, for "flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom." The spirit must be "born again," for sin cannot enter into the Kingdom.

To Abraham, on reaching the border of Canaan, the promise of an *everlasting* possession of Canaan by himself and his descendants, was given, and subsequently sealed by the Covenant of Circumcision.

That Covenant was a Sacrament, consisting of an external sign with a "spiritual grace;" the "Circumcision of the heart,"—Regeneration.

The sign of that Covenant was commanded to be administered to every male child eight days old; which thus became entitled to all the privileges of

the Jewish Church, and (if it died before actual sin) to an entrance into Canaan in its future state of glory.

The millions of Israelites, dying in the interval between the promise to Abraham and the invasion of Canaan by Joshua, and dying in faith; were by this sign of Regeneration entitled to the inheritance of the glorified Canaan.

On the close of the Jewish dispensation, John the Baptist proclaimed the coming of the Messiah. Christ came, like Abraham, a pilgrim in the World, but like him receiving the promise of possession in glory.

As Circumcision had been given to Judæism as the sign of a Covenant; Baptism was given to Christianity as the sign of a Covenant.

As the Jewish sign entitled the Jewish child to an entrance into the future place of glory with Abraham; the Christian sign entitled the Christian child to an entrance into the future kingdom, with our Lord.

As the object in both instances was the same, the Heavenly state; for *wherever* God visibly reigns, is Heaven; as the Regeneration in both instances was equally necessary; and as the Regeneration of the Jewish infant was received at eight days old, what rational doubt can be felt, that Regeneration is also received by the Christian infant at an equally early period?

This view meets all the difficulties at once. But, if

we suffer ourselves to doubt, merely because we cannot comprehend *how* an infant can be spiritually new born; what doctrine of Revelation can we receive, or even what process of nature can we acknowledge? We must deny the existence of light, of the atmosphere, of the circulation of the blood, of the growth of a blade of grass; for in which of them do we not encounter problems utterly baffling the most muscular grasp of the understanding. Who can comprehend the connexion of mind and body? What is life? We look into Nature, like children turning over an immense volume, of which we can scarcely read a line; we live in the midst of wonders of creative power, magnificent buildings of the Divine hand; but, like Egyptian temples, covered with hieroglyphics, waiting for the decypherers of ages unborn, or perhaps to keep their secrets from man for ever.

Revelation is the language of Heaven; given, not for our curiosity, but for our obedience. All that in Revelation man can require, is to know that it comes from above. Revelation itself is a science, but whose discoveries must find their full development only beyond the grave. It is to be *mastered* only by immortals, and belongs to Eternity.

THE

THEORY OF BAPTISM,

&c.

ERRATUM.

INTRODUCTION, p. xv., line 5 from the bottom, *insert* his *after* up

THE authority of the Fathers in matters of doctrine has been often, and not unjustly, questioned. Living in periods of personal hazard,—involved in the conflicts of angry heresies,—and perplexed at once with the violences of public faction, and the mysticisms of Asiatic philosophy,—they exhibit the common fallibility of man. But, in matters of fact, they are valuable witnesses. Their history of ecclesiastical opinions is honest, and their general testimony is to be relied on, as that of individuals possessing ample opportunities of knowing the truth, with no motives for its perversion, and with the strongest motives for giving it to the world.

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THE

THEORY OF BAPTISM,

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CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT BAPTISM.

The authority of the Fathers in matters of doctrine has been often, and not unjustly, questioned. Living in periods of personal hazard,—involved in the conflicts of angry heresies,—and perplexed at once with the violences of public faction, and the mysticisms of Asiatic philosophy,—they exhibit the common fallibility of man. But, in matters of fact, they are valuable witnesses. Their history of ecclesiastical opinions is honest, and their general testimony is to be relied on, as that of individuals possessing ample opportunities of knowing the truth, with no motives for its perversion, and with the strongest motives for giving it to the world.

CLEMENS ROMANUS.

The first evidence, in point of date, is the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians.

Clement is presumed to have been Bishop of Rome, and to have been martyred in the reign of Trajan (A.D. 100); and the name is conspicuously mentioned by St. Paul: in referring to those disciples who laboured with him in the Gospel,—"with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are written in the book of life [1]." The epistle of Clement to the Corinthian Church was highly received by the Christian communities of his time, and was read extensively through the churches. Of this epistle Irenæus speaks, as "written by Clement, who had seen the blessed Apostles, and conversed with them; who had the preaching of the Apostles still sounding in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes."

On original sin, and the necessity for its purification, the epistle quotes the authority of the Old Testament [2].

"Of Job it is thus written,—'That he was just and blameless, true, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil:' yet he condemns himself, and says, 'There is no man free from pollution; no, not though his life be but the length of a day [3].'" The version

[1] Phil. iv. 3.

[2] ἔτι δὲ καὶ περὶ Ἰὼβ οὕτως γέγραπται.

[3] Job xiv. 4.

here is from the Septuagint, which was used in the Apostolic age; it differs slightly in expression from ours. Clement also quotes the memorable language of David: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me [4]." He subsequently says, in confirmation of the necessity of purifying the original guilt of our nature,—"Let us consider, therefore, brethren, whereof we are made: who, and what kind of persons we came into the world, as it were out of a sepulchre, and from utter darkness. He that made and formed us brought us into his own world; having prepared for us his benefits before we were born [5]."

HERMAS.

The testimony of Hermas, in the work entitled "The Shepherd of Hermas," refers at once to the original pollution of man, and the power of Baptism. Among its expressions is, "Your life is saved by water." In speaking of the redeemed, it says, "It was necessary that they should come up through the water, that they might rest. For they could not otherwise enter into the kingdom of God, than by putting off the mortality of their former life. They therefore, after they were dead, were sealed with the seal of God; and so entered into the kingdom of God. For, before any one receives the name of the

[4] Psalm li. 5.

[5] c. 38.

Son of God he is liable to death; but when he receives that seal he is delivered from death, and is assigned to life. Now, that seal is *water*, into which persons go down, liable to death, but come out of it assigned to life. For which reason, to those also was that seal preached, and they used it, that they might enter into the kingdom of God."

The Shepherd of Hermas" is a vision, and, as such, exhibits a slight and imaginary story. But its antiquity is proved from its frequent quotations by Irenæus (A.D. 178), Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 194), Tertullian (A.D. 200), and Origen (A.D. 230). If written by Hermas, referred to by St. Paul[6],—"Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, HERMAS, Patrobus, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them,"—it must, of course, have been written in the Apostolic age. All those points have been disputed; but the date of the work has never been placed lower than the middle of the second century[7].

JUSTIN MARTYR.

Justin was originally a heathen, and was converted to Christianity in A.D. 132: he was a man of talent and of great diligence. Indignant at the sufferings of the Christians, he wrote two defences of them (Apologies). He died for the faith A.D. 164.

In the First Apology, addressed to Antoninus

[6] Rom. xvi. 14.

[7] Lardner, v. ii.

Pius, he says, "I shall now declare to you, after what manner we, being *made new* in Christ, have dedicated ourselves to God. . . . . Those who are persuaded and do believe that the things taught by us are true, and do promise to live according to them, are directed, first, to pray and ask of God, with fasting, the forgiveness of their former sins; and we also fast and pray with them.

"Then we bring them to some place where there is water, and they are *regenerated* by the same way of regeneration, by which *we* were regenerated. For they are washed with water in the name of God, the Father and Lord of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ says, 'Unless ye be regenerated, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;' and every one knows that it is impossible for those that are once born, to enter again into their mother's womb[8]."

The reason for giving this quotation is not with reference to Infant Baptism, of which it says nothing; but in the first place for the proof, that the primitive Christians used the word Regeneration as synonymous with the act of Baptism; and in the next, to show that they took the declaration, "Ye must be regenerated of Water and the Spirit," as commanding *Water Baptism*, for the New Birth; and not for mere repentance or conversion.

[8] Ὃν τρόπον δὲ ἀναθηκάμην ἑαυτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ, &c.

In another passage of this Defence of Christianity he says, "Several persons among us, sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were made disciples of Christ in their childhood (ἐκ παίδων) continue uncorrupted[9]." But, persons made disciples of Christ in their childhood, seventy years before the period of this Defence, must have been baptized within thirty or forty years of the Ascension. So distinct is the evidence for Infant Baptism in the Apostolic age.

IRENÆUS.

Irenæus was a man of high authority in the Church, from his being trained by Polycarp, from his public labours, and from his actual position as Bishop of Lyons, in France. This position it then demanded especial devotion to undertake, for his predecessor, Pothinus, was martyred; and especial vigour to maintain, for heresy was already springing up on every side. Irenæus may have conversed with many who had seen the Apostles, for he was born in the beginning of the second century. He wrote vigorously and constantly; but his works have perished, leaving only their names, with the exception of the "Five Books on the Heresies," even of which we have only a Latin translation. He is supposed to have been martyred.

[9] "Quum vero præscribitur nemini sine Baptismo competere salutem," &c.

He says, "Therefore, He (Christ) was a Master, as He had the age of a Master; not disdaining, nor going in a way above human nature, nor breaking in his own person the law which He had set for mankind; but sanctifying every several age by the likeness which it has to Him. For He came to save all persons by Himself. All, I say, who by Him are regenerated unto God (*renascuntur in Deum*), infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder ones[1]."

This testimony to Baptism, as the spiritual second birth, is complete evidence of the doctrine in the second century. Wherever Irenæus uses the word "regenerate," he uses it as synonymous with "baptized."

In his third book[2], where he produces testimonies of Scripture to the Holy Spirit, he says of Christ, "When He gave his disciples the commission of regenerating unto God (*potestatem regenerationis in Deum*), He said unto them, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.'" The "commission of regenerating" is every where used by Irenæus as the equivalent expression for the commission of baptizing.

TERTULLIAN.

Tertullian, the son of a Roman, but born in Africa, was one of the most distinguished personages of his

[1] Adversus Hæreses. [2] c. 19.

time; a man of eloquence, accomplished in the best learning of the age, and educated for the law. Born in heathenism, he embraced the Christian priesthood, and his conversion brought a great accession of ability to the Christian cause. Living in the reigns of Severus and Caracalla, when the Church was calumniated, that it might be persecuted; he exerted himself to refute its calumniators, and produced his famous Apology, addressed to the proconsul of Africa, and stating the actual habits and objects of Christianity.

In his latter years, and probably with decaying intellects, he adopted the tenets of Montanus, a fanatic, who attracted disciples by a show of austerity. But, with all his defects, he was a powerful champion, and a great name.

He says, "It is an acknowledged rule, that none can be saved without *Baptism*, grounded especially on that sentence of our Lord, 'Unless one be born of water, he cannot be saved [3].'" This shows that, in his time, Baptism and the second birth were synonymous.

He then goes into the refutation of cavils as to the Baptism of the Apostles, &c., answering especially the heresy which has returned so largely in modern times. "Impious men raise cavils, and say, Baptism is not necessary for those who have faith, which is sufficient; for Abraham, without any sacrament of water, but of faith alone, pleased God."

[3] On Baptism (12).

To this cavil the answer is as plain and practical now as it was then. "In all matters, the *last* instructions bind. The *last* rules supersede those which went before. Though there were salvation formerly by bare faith, before our Lord's passion and resurrection, yet when the faith is enlarged, to believe in his nativity, passion, and resurrection; there is an enlargement of the Sacrament, the sealing of Baptism, as it were a garment to our faith, which formerly was bare, but *cannot now be* without its law. For the *law of baptizing* is given, and the form of it appointed. 'Go,' says He, 'teach the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' And, when to this law that *rule* is added, 'Except one be *regenerated* of water and the Spirit he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' it has bound up faith as a necessity of Baptism, and therefore all believers from thenceforward were baptized."

The opinions of Tertullian, a bold and passionate writer, varied at times on this subject as on others. But our concern is not with his opinions, but with his facts, and his facts are all for the received identity of Baptism with Regeneration.

ORIGEN [4].

Origen was an Egyptian, of Alexandria, and the son of a martyr. At an early age he became re-

[4] Born about A.D. 185.

markable for his learning. Taking the priesthood, his eloquence attracted all ranks, and his writings made a powerful impression. But the Alexandrian philosophy impaired his interpretations of Scripture, and the judgment of Cassiodorus—"*Ubi bene nemo melius, ubi male nemo pejus*," was fully confirmed by the judgment of the Church. He was put to the torture in the Decian persecution, and it is still doubtful whether he was not martyred.

He says, "Hear David [5] speaking: 'I was conceived in iniquity, and in sins did my mother bring me forth [6],' showing that every soul that is born in the flesh is polluted with the foulness of sin and iniquity, and that, therefore, that was said which we mentioned before, that none is clean from pollution, though his life be but the length of one day."

"Besides all this, let it be considered what is the reason that, whereas the baptism of the Church is given for forgiveness of sins, infants also are by the usage of the Church baptized; when, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them."

In his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, (B. v.) he says, "In the law it is commanded, that a sacrifice be offered for every child that is born, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, of

[5] "Audi David dicentem, In iniquitatibus conceptus sum," &c.

[6] Homily viii. on Levit. xii.

which one is for a sin offering, the other for a burnt offering." For what sin is this one pigeon offered? Can the child that is new born have committed any sin? It has even then sin, for which the sacrifice is commanded to be offered, from which even he whose life is but of one day is denied to be free.

"Of this sin, David is to be supposed to have said that which we mentioned before, "In sin did my mother conceive me." "For this cause, also, the Church had from the Apostles a tradition (order) to give baptism even to infants."

The authenticity of those passages has been disputed, on the ground that we have only the translations by Rufinus, a loose and paraphrastical writer. But they are retained, because they are perfectly consistent with other commentaries of Origen, of acknowledged authenticity. For instance, in the homily on Luke xiii.:—

"Having occasion given in this place, I shall mention a thing which causes frequent inquiries among the brethren. Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? or when have they sinned? or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to the sense that we mentioned even now—none is free from pollution—though his life be but the length of one day upon the earth? And, it is for this reason, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized."

This homily is translated by Jerome, and is indisputably the work of Origen.

Erasmus at one time was of another opinion, but he afterwards admitted its genuineness. Origen's Platonism discountenances his Christianity; but we require not his opinions, but his facts, and his facts as to the early custom of infant baptism are strong. He was the descendant of an ancient Christian family, and thus, his "forefathers," as Eusebius designates them, or "his grandfathers and great grandfathers," as they are named by Rufinus, must have lived in the Apostolic age. He must, of course, have known, from his own ancestry, whether infants were or were not baptized in the days of the Apostles.

His extraordinary learning, his remarkable intelligence, and even the extent of his travels, for he appears to have visited and resided in nearly all the chief provinces of the Roman Empire; must have placed all the chief practices of Christianity before his eye. Origen's testimony to infant baptism is undeniable.

CYPRIAN, A.D. 253. EPISC. lxiv.

Cyprian was Bishop of Carthage, and a man of eminent ability and learning. He was exiled for the faith, and finally martyred, A.D. 258.

It was customary for the neighbouring Bishops to meet and decide Church questions, and his epistle

was occasioned by a letter from Fidus, a country Bishop, expressing the opinion, that a Christian infant could *not* be baptized before the eighth day, as in the Jewish circumcision.

The answer is thus headed, "Cyprian and his other colleagues, present in Council, in number sixty-six, to Fidus, our brother, greeting:—

"* * * * * We have read your letter, as in the case of infants. Whereas you judge that they must *not* be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born: we, in our assembly, were all of the contrary opinion; for, as to what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind; but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born. For whereas our Lord, in his Gospel, says 'The Son of Man came not to destroy men's souls (*animas*), but to save them,' so far as in us lies, no soul (*anima*) is to be lost."

In this translation of the words of our Lord, the substitution of soul for physical life is observable. But we are still concerned only with tracing the course of opinion.

The epistle, after some remarks on birth and circumcision, proceeds to say:—

"We judge, that no person is to be hindered

from obtaining the grace, by the law now appointed; and that the spiritual circumcision ought not to be restrained by the circumcision that was according to the flesh; but that all are to be admitted to the grace of Christ, since Peter, speaking in the Acts of the Apostles, says, "the Lord has shown me that no person is to be called common or unclean."

"If any thing could be an obstacle to persons as to obtaining the grace, the adult, and elder men, would be more hindered by their more grievous sins. If, then, the greatest offenders, and they who have grievously sinned against God before, have, when they afterwards came to believe, forgiveness of their sins, and no person is kept off from Baptism and grace; how much less reason is there to refuse an infant, who being newly born, has no sin, save that being descended from Adam, according to the flesh, he has from his birth contracted the contagion of the death threatened of old; who comes, for this reason, more easily to receive forgiveness of sins, because they are not his own, but others' sins, that are forgiven?

"This, therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the assembly; that it is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful, kind, and affectionate to all."

The reasonings of the Bishop are not equal to his principles, and he obviously, in some degree, alike mistakes the nature of the Jewish rite and the

grounds of the Christian. But his testimony to the actual baptism of infants in his diocese, and in his century, is incontestable; and the genuineness of this epistle is decided, from its frequent quotations by the chief controversalists, Augustin, and others, in a totally different controversy, the PELAGIAN.

A passage in his Book on "the fallen," referring to the subject of infant baptism; gives a striking example of the torrid eloquence of Africa. Cyprian, is addressing the apostates who had yielded to the terrors of persecution:—

"When you came to the Capitol (the idol temple), when you went with a ready compliance to the commission of that horrible crime, did not your limbs tremble, your sight wax dim, your breasts shudder, your arms fall down? Did not your mind grow amazed; your tongue cling; your speech fail? Could one stand there who was the servant of God, and speak and renounce Christ, who had already renounced the devil and the world? Was not the altar, where he came to die (spiritually), a funeral pile to him? Ought he not to abhor and fly the altar of the devil, which he saw smoking and fuming with a horrid stench, as if he saw his place of death. There thou hast immolated thy salvation. Why bring the offering? why the victim? you are the offering, you the victim. Thou hast burnt thy hope, thy faith, in those deadly fires.

"Many, too, there were who thought their own

ruin not enough. The people were driven by mutual oaths to destruction: death was pledged to each other in the cup of death.

"And that nothing might be wanting to the load of their guilt, their infants, carried or led in the hands of the parents, lost what they had obtained in the beginning of their existence (*primo statim nativitatis exordio*). Shall not they, when the day of judgment comes, say, *We* have done nothing, nor have *we* abandoned the food and cup of the Lord, to come to these profane corruptions. The perfidy of others ruined us; we found our parents our parricides: it was they who denied for us the Church our mother, and God our Father: so that we, young, unconscious, and ignorant of so great a crime, are bound by others in this confederacy of guilt, we are ensnared by the fraud of others!"

The assertion in this strong passage respecting the guilt of infants through parental apostasy, produced an argument, in which Augustin overthrew this rash and repulsive conception. Augustin asserts the power of Baptism, and that he who is once regenerated by it cannot afterwards be entangled in the guilt of another's sin, to which he does not consent. He explains; that the guilt of original sin is communicated from the parent, because the infant is not yet a separate being (*anima separatim vivens*). But, when the child has become a separate being (*in se ipso alter ab eo qui genuit*), he is no longer guilty of his parents' sin.

THE COUNCIL OF ELIBERIS (A.D. 305).

"If any one shall go over from the Church Catholic to any heresy, and shall return to the Church, it is allowed that penance (*pœnitentia*) shall not be refused to such a person, because he acknowledges his fault. Let him be in the state of penance for ten years; and, after ten years, let him be admitted to communion.

"But, if they were infants, when they were carried over, inasmuch as it was not by their own fault that they sinned, they ought to be admitted without delay (*incunctanter*)."

Though there is no direct mention of Infant Baptism in this passage, yet it is obviously implied; as the infants are said to be "carried over" (*transducti*) *from* the Church; it never having been the custom to regard any one, whether adult or infant, as belonging to the Church, *before* Baptism. The adults and infants designed for Christians were called Catechumens; the general inquiry relative to an infant, "is he Fidelis or Catechumenus?" being always equivalent to "Is he baptized, or not?"

THE COUNCIL OF NEO-CÆSAREA (about A.D. 314)[7].

Among the subtleties of ancient disquisition was, "Whether a heathen woman, about to become a

[7] περὶ κυοφορούσης, ὅτι δεῖ φωτίζεσθαι.

mother, should be baptized on her conversion, or should wait until her child was born?" The true question being, whether the Baptism might *not* extend to the unborn babe? Thus making the future Baptism of the infant culpable, as a double Baptism was forbidden.

The decision of the council was, that the woman should be baptized at once. "For the mother, in this instance, communicates nothing to the child. Because, in the profession, every one's peculiar resolution (ἰδίαν τὴν προαίρεσιν, personal intent) is declared."

The origin of this doubt seems to have been the Jewish rule, that if a female, before the birth of her child, were to become a proselyte, and be, of course, baptized, it was not required that her infant should also be baptized. But this rule referred merely to the case of proselytism, which always required baptism. The infant was thenceforth the child of a Jewish believer, and as Jews were not *baptized*, the rite was not adopted.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN (about A.D. 350) [8].

Gregory was the son of the Bishop of Nazianzum in Asia Minor, and was Bishop of Constantinople. His learning and talents, independently of his rank in the imperial city, placed him at the head of religious opinion in his age. Though not baptized

[8] Oration on Holy Baptism.

himself in infancy, he gives that evidence of the practice of Infant Baptism which is the strongest, from its being referred to less in the shape of argument than as a thing habitually received.

In a species of funeral panegyric on his intimate friend Basil (though preached before his death), he marks the stages of his career.—In the beginning of his existence (*πρῶτα τῆς ἡλικίας*) he was swaddled [9], if I may so call it, by his excellent father, a public teacher of virtue in the country of Pontus; and was fashioned with that best and most pure formation which divine David rightly calls "of the day." Gregory had previously spoken of three forms of birth,—the physical, the baptismal, and that of the resurrection. The baptismal he called that of the day. He then proceeds to state his boyhood at school, his youth at the university at Athens, then his taking orders, and finally, his distinction as a man of learning and Bishop of Cæsarea.

He also compares Basil to Samuel, who was anointed to God from his birth. In another place he renews this example of Samuel, in censuring mothers who were afraid of putting their infants into the water of baptism. "Thou art afraid, faint-hearted mother; but Hannah, before Samuel was born, dedicated him to God; and when he was born presently consecrated him, and brought him up in a priestly garment."

[9] *σπαργανοῦται.*

In his "*Oratio pro Baptismo*," Gregory enters largely into the nature of this sacrament; which he names, in the language of Scripture, the grace, the marking, the anointing, the laver of regeneration, the seal, &c.

In alluding to original sin, he says, "God has not left his creature without a remedy. But, as He first made us, so He renews us by his divine formation." He then draws the distinction between infant and adult baptism. "To those entering into life it is a *seal*, to the adult it is a *grace*, and the restoring of the lost image" (of God).

He also draws the distinction between Regeneration and Repentance; cautioning the Christian to be careful of his regeneration, because there is none other afterwards. He acknowledges the value of repentance, "which, however, leaves a scar, costs tears, and may be intercepted by death." He warns the Christian against the delay of baptism, which by sickness may be rendered difficult, or by death impossible. It appears to have been a conception in this age, that baptism should be delayed as long as possible, for the purpose of including all the sins of a life. Against this custom, which, however, refers chiefly to adults, he argues strongly, from the hazards incident to life. He objects even to those who wait for a particular day, as Epiphany or Easter.

On the general service of baptism, in reference to infants, he says, "What say you to those who are as

yet infants, and are not in a capacity to be yet sensible of either the grace, or its loss? Shall we baptize them too? Yes, by all means, if any danger makes it requisite. For it is better that they should be sanctified without their own sense of it, than that they should die unsealed and uninitiated. And a ground of this to us is circumcision, which was given on the eighth day as a typical *seal*, and was practised on those who had no use of reason."

Gregory had evidently shared some of the notions of his age, that baptism would be more available, if the child could personally enter into the covenant; and he recommends delay "for three years, when the infant might be capable of hearing and answering some of the holy words; or when, if it did not perfectly understand their meaning, it might at least form them." He seems to have overlooked the obvious uselessness of pronouncing words without meaning; but he soon reverts to the more rational rule, of preventing the liability to the accidents of nature, by securing the babe through the laver (baptism).

BASIL (about A.D. 326).

Basil was Bishop of Cæsarea, and the successor of Eusebius. He is regarded as among the ablest of the Fathers. Educated for the law, his style is remarkable as well for logical strength, as for natural ardour. His chief labours were devoted to the defence of the Athanasian doctrine, which exposed

him to the wrath of the Arian emperor, Valens. He was evidently a man of strong conceptions and clear judgment. His testimony to the essential importance of Baptism, at every age, is unquestionable.

In his "Hortatory Oration on Baptism," in speaking of the Jewish practice, he says:—

"A Jew does not delay circumcision; because he has the threatening, that every soul which is not circumcised on the eighth day shall be cut off from his people. And dost thou put off the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off the flesh, which is *performed in Baptism*, when thou hearest our Lord Himself say, 'Verily, I say unto you, except one be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God?' If Israel had not passed through the sea, they had not got rid of Pharaoh; and unless thou pass through the water, thou shalt not get rid of the cruel tyranny of the devil.

"If a physician should undertake by any art to make you young again, you would eagerly long for the day in which your florid youth would be restored. And yet now, when it is told you that your soul, defiled with all kinds of sin, may be born again by Baptism, you slight so great a benefit.

"I know your reason, though you think to conceal it. 'I will use the flower of my age in pleasure, and then, when I have had enough, I shall give it over, and be baptized.' Think you that God does not

see your purpose? or that He will give his grace to so wicked a heart? If you leave off your sins through age, thanks to your inability. . . . . Who has given you a lease of your life? Do you not see children snatched from the breast, and others dying in the flower of their age?

"The devil cries, 'Give me to-day, and give God to-morrow.' But God says, 'To-day, if ye will hear my voice.' The devil gives us hope of to-morrow, but, when to-morrow is come, he, as a fraudulent divider, asks that day for himself, and gives the to-morrow to God. . . . . Do you not, in like manner, put off from year to year, from month to month, from day to day, till a day seize you that you are not aware of, and the opportunity of well-doing fail you with your life. . . . . Do you say, God will then hear me? Yes, because you hear Him now! He will grant me a longer time. Yes, because you make good use of what He does grant you! Wretch! deceive not yourself. Let none deceive you with empty words, sudden destruction will come upon you. . . . . What thoughts will you have then? Fool that I was! Why did I not put off this heavy load of sin, when I might have done it easily? Why not wash away those foul stains? Oh, woeful purpose of mine! for the short pleasure of sin, to suffer eternal torment! I might now be one of those shining in glory! Oh, just judgment of God!"

CHRYSOSTOM (died 407)[1].

Chrysostom was the most conspicuous ecclesiastic of his era. Born of an opulent family at Antioch, and educated for the law, he was suddenly struck with a fantastic zeal for the austerities of the hermit life, retired to a mountain cave, and there remained for six years. But, a man of genius, he signalized himself so highly by his preaching, on his return once more among men; that on the death of Nectarius, the patriarch of Constantinople, Chrysostom was elected to the patriarchate.

Fond of popularity, he exercised his powers so effectively for popular sympathy, that it became a custom among the multitude to say, "They would rather that the sun should lose his shining, than that they should lose John's preaching." His career was brilliant and unhappy; but his sermons were vivid, if not always classical; and his character was unstained.

The testimony of this eminent person to the practice of Infant Baptism in his time is perfectly plain. He scarcely *discusses* the question, but speaks of it as one would speak of a matter of regular occurrence. For example, among the superior values of Baptism to the Jewish rite, he reckons, its being "unconfined by limitation of age, but that it might be administered equally in the *very beginning of life*, in maturity and in old age[2]."

[1] Homilies. [2] Homil. 40.

In another of those homilies [3], in alluding to the growing evils of his time, he says, "The Catechumens, being of this mind (perverted), take no care of a godly life. And those that are baptized, some of them, forasmuch as they were *children* when they received it, and some as they received it in a fit of sickness, having no mind to live godly, show no good inclination, and they who received it in their health show very little."

The result of this degeneracy was to be found in the sudden rise of Schism, and the rapid confusion of ideas on all the leading doctrines of Christianity. In this age rose the controversies on the divinity of Christ, and on original sin, with all the shapes and shades of error which finally brought down the divine wrath, and crushed the Church of Asia under Mahometanism. But, in all this conflict of opinions, Infant Baptism was retained; and in all the Catalogues of the heresies there is no mention of any sect which denied Baptism to infants, where it retained Baptism at all. It was thus practised by the three great sects of the century, the Donatist, the Arian, and the Pelagian. The use of Infant Baptism had followed the use of Adult Baptism in the Apostolic age: it was adopted, probably, in that age, and by the Apostles themselves; from the mention of their having baptized households; it being naturally presumed that households implied persons of all ages; and from

[3] Homil. 23.

there being no declared exception of infancy. But, from the time when missionary conversions were exchanged for settled Christianity, the Baptism of Christian infants seems to have been general.

Those extracts from the writings of the first four centuries have been condensed from the learned, but diffuse, History of Infant Baptism by Wall,—a work abounding in references, yet sometimes perplexing the subject by the dubiousness of their application. The passages which have been given here, sufficiently convey the testimony of the Fathers.

CHAPTER II.

THE TWO SACRAMENTS.

The original Anabaptist Heresy arose from ignorance of the true object of Baptism. Those of the Established Church, in our day, who, admitting Infant Baptism, yet demand previous dispositions, of which infancy is altogether incapable; evidently regard Adult Baptism as the systematic purpose of the Sacrament, and Infant Baptism as but the exceptional.

This error is fundamental, and is fatal; the fact being, that infant baptism is the systematic purpose, and adult baptism the exceptional. And this is obvious, even from the nature of things. In the first preaching of the Gospel, as it could be received only by the mature understanding, the converts must be adults, and of course adult baptism must be the general rule; but as conversion spread, and those converts became parents; if infants were baptized at all, adult baptism must decrease, while that of infants must increase. If a whole nation were made Chris-

tian, adult baptism in that nation must wholly cease. If the world were made Christian, adult baptism would be no more; infant baptism must be universal.

We find the principle,—that the first is the exceptional case, and the second, the systematic; existing in the most important transactions of religion. In the first age, the Church was governed by a body of extraordinary men, personal witnesses of the mission of our Lord; constantly occupied in carrying the Gospel through all kingdoms; arguing in synagogues, preaching in barbarian countries, writing expositions of doctrine to the Churches of Europe and Asia; yet always without any local authority, or fixed place of superintendence.

But, this government *must* have been temporary: the Apostleship being distinctly limited to those who had seen our Lord on earth; with the single exception of St. Paul, who describes his Apostleship as that of "one born out of due time," but who had seen our Lord in vision, and had received his especial command to preach the Gospel.

And, while it is obvious that those gifted men must pass away; it is equally obvious, that the best provision for a settled Church must be, in a settled discipline, superintended by settled teachers, men responsible for their rule, with prescribed districts, and always on the spot, to administer to the spiritual wants of their charge. We even find this plan commenced, in some degree, in the time of St. Paul

himself; who left Timothy at Ephesus, with duties actually comprehending nearly all the duties of the Bishops of our day,—to superintend the teaching and guard the purity of doctrine in the chief Church of Asia Minor, the Church of the Ephesian converts[1]; to judge of the characters of its proposed pastors[2]; to put the brethren in remembrance of the truth[3]; and to regulate the conduct of the elders[4]. The foundations of the system were thus laid, and were clearly of a distinct nature from the express functions of the Apostolic character. Timothy was subsequently called away to accompany St. Paul; but he wrote no Epistle, he exercised no "care of all the Churches," he never acted as an *Apostle*.

The case of Titus is even more direct. He was left in Crete to *rebuke* with all *authority*, and to *ordain* elders. Yet, as the system was still incomplete, he also was called to attend St. Paul, which he probably did, into Dalmatia. But, all ecclesiastical tradition attests, that he returned to Crete, where we may justly conceive that he exercised his former authority, and where he died, upwards of ninety years old.

I am not about to enter here into the disputed questions of episcopacy; (questions which, I think, have been insufficiently treated, even in our time;) but nothing can be better known, than that the settlement of high ecclesiastical authorities (*pastores pastorum*)

[1] Chap. i. [2] iii. [3] iv. [4] ii.

over prescribed districts, was the *rule* of the Church, for the fifteen hundred following years.

We also find this principle sustained on more than historical testimony,—on the evidence of inspiration. The last remonstrances of the last Apostle were addressed to the Seven settled rulers of the Churches of Asia; those Churches probably reckoning multitudes, spreading over extensive districts, and strongly resembling the episcopal provinces of later times.—"John, to the Seven Churches, which are in Asia . . . . The mystery of the Seven Stars, which thou sawest in my right hand; the Seven Stars are the angels (the rulers) of the Seven Churches, and the Seven Candlesticks which thou sawest, are the Seven Churches[5]."

The same principle existed even in the miraculous means of spreading the Gospel. The gifts of miracle were essential to the first formation of the Church; they broke down heathenism; they relieved the difficulties of Christian labour among barbarian countries; and they effected, perhaps, the still higher purpose of attesting to their possessors themselves the truth of their mission. The Jewish or the Gentile peasant, who felt himself suddenly master of powers which he never possessed before, and of which he could scarcely imagine the possession,—the faculties of speaking all languages, of expelling disease with a word, of giving sight and strength to the

[5] Apocal. i.

blind and the decrepit, and even of giving life to the dead; must have felt a conviction of the truth of Christianity, which no power of sophistry could shake. It was almost a physical impossibility, that he could doubt of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or hesitate in the delivery of his mission to mankind.

But it was equally evident, that the possession of those gifts must have been but for a time: that if extended to a later period of the Church, they would have been a source of disturbance to the whole order of society; and that, in the common waywardness of man, their possessors might have become dangerous to the world. If we find that they required the strongest curb, even in the Apostolic age[6], what must they have become, when the Church extended to nations, when rank and opulence were among the stimulants to human passion, and when the purity of a primitive and persecuted Church had been exchanged for the worldly habits and wide supremacy of the thirteen patriarchates of the fourth and fifth centuries!

But, the question is not left to human conjecture. It was declared by inspiration, that the time of the miraculous gifts must have a close; that the progress of the Church must be consigned to less conspicuous qualities; that the viewless agencies of Providence should be the guardians of a simpler, and yet of a

[6] 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

broader career of Christianity; and that the more "excellent way" of personal virtue should soon be the substitute for the splendours of miracle. "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity."

It is true that a new burst of supernatural powers is predicted, in the same sentence, by St. Paul; and that the future shall exhibit the possession of faculties by the Christian, to which even the gifts of the Pentecost were brief and partial. For, in the language of the Apostle, himself one of the most largely gifted with miraculous powers,—"We know in *part*, and we prophesy in *part:* but, when that which is *perfect* is come; then that which is in part shall be done away." The smaller gift shall be merged in the greater. But, in the mean time, and that a time which has now nearly reached two thousand years; a period as long as from the calling of Abraham to the coming of Christ; the Church has been given into the charge of settled pastorship and personal virtue. The second state has thus been the systematic, the first the exceptional.

And thus it was with adult and infant baptism: the former, though the immediate, was the exceptional; and if the latter were allowed at all, which has never been doubted, adult baptism must have been designed, ultimately to cease altogether.

But, the case derives additional evidence from the nature of Baptism itself. Christ has appointed two Sacraments, of which the object is the same,—the

entrance into the kingdom of heaven. *Each* is completely adequate to that object: for none have ever doubted that the baptized infant, dying in infancy, becomes a member of Christ. Why then have *two* means been given, *each* of which is declaredly sufficient? Where have we another instance of Divine superfluity? The only solution can be, that the two sacraments have been appointed to two different conditions of things here. In earth, there are two strongly-marked conditions of human existence; one, in which the understanding is wholly undeveloped; and the other, in which it is developed,—infancy, and manhood. There are also two conditions of sin, original, and personal. The infant is born under the former, but is evidently incapable of the latter. It is declared, that Baptism washes away all sin; but, if it were delayed until the development of the understanding, countless multitudes of Christian infants must die, still under the stain of original sin; for one of the most remarkable anomalies in human existence is the prodigious loss of infant life; a mortality rare in any other than humankind.

Whether this early loss of life proceeds from some secret law of nature, or from the mere ignorance of man[7], the fact seems to have been always the same. It is computed that, even in the improved

[7] The diseases of infancy form a peculiar class, which seldom extends to more mature years, and then only in a milder type. In infancy they are remarkable for violence and rapidity.

state of medical science in this country, one *fourth* of all born die before they are five years old.

Without the arrogance of demanding that the Almighty shall supply a counteraction for every calamity of man; is it inconsistent with those conceptions of his mercy, which He has commanded us to receive, that He "who willeth not the death of a sinner," may provide a merciful compensation for so wide a calamity? that He, whose name is Love, may offer the means of rescuing innumerable creatures, burthened with no personal sin, from the effects of the sin of Adam? and that, calling them from this world before they have the power of "working out their own salvation" through his Spirit; He may give them a grace of his own? Is it even inconsistent with the highest acts of his providence, that while inflicting on the hearts of their parents one of the deepest pangs of human feeling, the bitter fruits of that sin which brought death into the world, He may administer the sacred consolation, that He has taken them to Himself, and raised them into a world of happiness, without exposure to the anxious hazards and long probation of the life of man?

But, while we have the unlimited declaration, that Baptism saves from all sin, original as well as personal, and while the delay of a few years would be equivalent to the rejection, how can man be justified in rejecting a fourth of all the children of Christian parents from Baptism? The very form of Baptism

might show, that it is intended for a period of life which cannot act for itself. Unlike the Lord's Supper, which, according to the habits of the first age, every man administered to himself, in the breaking of bread from house to house, after the Pentecost, and in the subsequent meetings of the converts; the administration of Baptism, even in the adult, implies the work of others. In that of the infant, the bringing to the font, and the services of the Minister, stamp it with a character of personal helplessness; while the adult can no more administer Baptism to himself than the child.

That Baptism was especially intended for infancy, may also be justly argued from the circumstance, that it was especially intended for the cleansing of original sin, the only sin of which infancy is capable. And that, it was especially so intended, is evident from the fact, that its renewal is never commanded; as no human being is now capable of the crime of Adam. By the same rule, the Lord's Supper is *not* the sacrament of infancy, for its renewal is commanded. "Do this, *as oft as* ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me;" its object being the cleansing of personal sins, which cannot exist in infancy, but which recur throughout life, in the weakness of human nature.

It is on a similar principle; that the initiatory rite of the Jew (being, like Baptism, the sign of a spiritual Covenant, entitling to possession in a future state of glory) was never renewed: the infant by that

one act being entitled to the privileges of the covenant of Canaan; while the Passover, the Day of Atonement, and the other piacular ceremonials of Judaism, were annually renewed, to meet the recurring sins of the nation.

Of the state of infants dying unbaptized, no theologian of any understanding will speak dogmatically. The Church of England lends no authority to the ferocities of foreign sectarianism. Having no revelation to guide her on the subject, she refuses to follow the guidance of religious temerity. Those infants are in the hands of a God of mercy. Yet there may be vast diversities of condition, even in an immortality where sorrow cannot come. We are to remember that the unbaptized infant does not belong to the family of the Gospel; that it is not a fellow-sharer in the inheritance of Christ; and that it is not a partaker of the first resurrection, or of that especial kingdom of glory over which Christ is king. There may be most solemn distinctions between the state of a being passing beyond the grave, stained with that sin which exiled the first man from Paradise, cost him immortality on earth, and has left a long bequeathment of infirmity and suffering to all his offspring; and the state of a being purified from all sin by Baptism, and raised into the possession of the splendours and powers of which Christ is the giver and the Lord.

What then can be more cruel, or even more

criminal, in the parent, than for a caprice, for a crude conception of doctrine, for a mere defiance of the Establishment, or for any thing capable of being prompted by the passions, or mistaken by the presumption of man, to expose the infant to so perilous a contingency! If all the authority of the primitive ages; if the labours of the ablest, most learned, and most pious men of seventeen centuries; if all the promptings of nature, that instinctive wisdom which God implants in the heart of man, are on the side of Infant Baptism; what parent can hope to justify himself before human nature, or the Creator of human nature, in refusing to his infant that Baptism, whose loss may be felt through an eternity!

Our true *precedent* is, in the Jewish reception of a Proselyte. The first operation was washing with water, to cleanse him from the spiritual pollutions of heathenism. This washing was distinct from the numerous washings prescribed by the law, and it was *never* repeated. The other rites of Judaism then followed, and the proselyte was finally admitted as one of the people. But the portion of the case especially applicable to the question of Infant Baptism is, that though the infants born before his proselytism were thus baptized, those born after it were never baptized; but, being regarded as Jewish children, underwent only the Jewish rite of the law on the eighth day.

On this subject the Jewish authorities are abundant. The proselytism of the parent, in the first instance, was taken to represent the proselytism of all his previous children, and they were all baptized by virtue of that conclusion; the Rabbinical rule being, "the proselytism of the father redounds for good to all his children[8]." They even urged the rule so far, that if a woman about to become a mother was made a proselyte, and was of course baptized, her proselytism was regarded as extending to the unborn infant, which, when born, thus required *no* Baptism.

The Jews, with that singular mixture of truth and error which has marked all their moral history, fully acknowledging that national Baptism was suitable to great national change, declared, that they had all been baptized at Sinai, by the command to wash their clothing before the giving of the law; thus overlooking the true and Divine Baptism in the Red Sea. They went further, and baptized, as proselytes, infants which they found exposed on the roads, or infants carried away from conquered provinces, which they made servants, or occasionally adopted as children. Lightfoot, the great master of Hebrew antiquity, observes, that "the baptizing of infants was a thing as well known in the Jewish Church, as in the Christian."

[8] Gemara—Babylon.

We find *no* instance, in which this Baptism was rebuked by Christ or the Apostles; yet they rebuked without scruple the superstitious practices, traditions, and religious innovations of the leaders of Jewish opinion. By this acknowledged precedent, the decisive answer is also made to the cavil, "Why has not a command been given in the New Testament for Infant Baptism?" Our Lord gave no unnecessary commands; and this command would have been wholly unnecessary. If a Jew had been sent forth to convert the world to Judæism, he would have included the children in the conversion of their parents, and regarded them, on the proselytism of the parent, as entitled to all the privileges customary with the Jewish infant. The Apostles, being Jews, would naturally follow the custom of their country, and regard the infants of a heathen convert as entitled, by the act of the parent, to an entrance into his religion; the only distinction being, that while to the Jewish proselyte Baptism constituted only a part of his admission, Baptism to the Christian convert constituted the whole.

But, the principle was the same. The infant of the proselyte *never* underwent the ceremony which denoted previous heathenism; it was born a Jew, and from its birth was entitled to all the privileges of the National Religion. Why should one rule exist for the infant of the proselyte, and another for the infant of the Christian, when the rite in both instances was

administered by Jews? or, why should our Lord be supposed to have rejected the universal custom of his country, without uttering a word in its condemnation? or, why should He be supposed to have adopted a new rite, of which He has transmitted no knowledge to mankind? or, why should He be presumed to have laid a new and most painful restriction on his Church, in a religion whose express spirit was, to relax the burthens of all?

But, the general retention of the Jewish idea in the Baptism of the Christian, may be shown in another striking shape. From the time when the proselyte was received into the Jewish Church, his infants were entitled to the name of "Jews." So, the infants of the Christian converts were entitled to the name by which the whole body of the converts were apostolically and scripturally designated—the "holy" (οἱ ἅγιοι, in our translation sometimes "the Saints[9]").

St. Paul distinctly gives this name to the infants of the converts; when, in stating the marriage code of Christianity, he forbids the separation of man and wife, through difference of religion (many of the converts having been already married to heathens); and he not only gives the name, but seems to found upon it the remarkable fact, that the Christian husband *sanctified* the heathen wife, and the Christian wife the

[9] The converts were not called Christians, until about A.D. 44. They had hitherto been called by the Jews Nazarenes, and Galilæans. The name was first given in Syria. (Acts xi.)

heathen husband: "*Else* were your children *unclean;* but now are they *holy*[1]."

Unclean was the Jewish designation of heathenism. Thus, St. Peter, in the conversion of Cornelius, says, "Ye know, how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one that is of another nation; but God hath showed me (by the previous vision) that I should not call any man common or *unclean.*" Thus, there was a declared distinction between the Christian infant and the heathen; the one was *holy* in the sight of the Church, while the other was *unclean:* and in what could the distinction between two infants consist; but that the one was capable of being a member of the Church of God, while the other was not capable; the word, *holy*, in the lips of Jews, in all matters of cups, and vessels, and things connected with worship, meaning "*dedicated to God?*" But, if Baptism were equally refused to the Christian infant and the heathen, where lay the distinction between the "holy" and the "unclean?"

The common cavil,—How can an infant be capable of being made a member of the Church?—is obviously answered by the fact; that in the Mosaic code, given by God Himself, the Jewish child, but eight days old, was thus capable; and was thenceforth entitled to all the privileges of Judæism.

[1] 1 Cor. vii.

But, if one infant were thus capable, and thus entitled, why not another? The answer to the similar cavil,—How can an infant have the Holy Ghost?—is simply in a reference to the Scriptural truth, that John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Ghost" from his birth. Thus, in each instance, the capacity is declared, and the cavil falls to the ground.

The last refuge of negligence or obstinacy on this subject is,—"How can we suppose, that the present omission of the parent may influence the perpetual condition of the child?" To this must be given the obvious answer, that, in the first place, the neglect ventures the future welfare of the infant, on an acknowledged hazard; and that, in the next, man is continually involved in the most serious responsibilities by acts over which he has no personal control. The *law* of dependency is a law of human nature. In nearly a third of life, and in that third of it in which the character is chiefly formed, the child is almost wholly dependent on the parent. Education, morals, fortune, and even, in some instances, life itself, are thus dependent. What is all society, but a system of dependence on the aids and alliances of our fellow-men? and how are we entitled to presume, that a chain which thus extends through every condition and every age of man, is to be broken on the edge of the grave?

CHAPTER III.

REGENERATION.

The doctrine of the New Birth by the Holy Spirit, holds so high a place in the Gospel, that eminent and essential as all its doctrines are, Regeneration is revealed to man with the fullest detail. It is the only doctrine, on which our Lord condescends to a direct conference with a stranger, allows a prolonged argument, or presses the hearer step by step towards truth, if not to conviction.

The memorable interview with Nicodemus may be best elucidated by a recurrence to the previous history. Our Lord, after confirming the belief of his disciples by the miracle of Cana in Galilee, had come to Jerusalem to the Passover. There He had suddenly signalized his power, by expelling the money-changers and sellers of cattle from the Temple, an act which cannot be accounted for, but by miracle. For what less than a power which paralyzed human resistance, could have made the grasping traffickers

submit to the overthrow of their tables, or the rough peasantry of Judea suffer themselves to be driven out with their cattle, by a solitary avenger?

But, this event had a still higher character. It was here that Jesus first publicly proclaimed Himself the Son of God; "Make not *My Father's* house a house of merchandize." It was here that He first declared the doctrine of the Resurrection; "Destroy this temple, and in *three days* I will raise it up." It was here too, that, in the act of expelling the worldly Jew from the court of the Gentiles, He gave the emblematic evidence of the time, when the Gentiles should be called to the knowledge of God. Thus, this single event comprehended all the distinctive features of his mission—his Divinity, his Sacrifice, and his universal Reign.

It is also evident, that the act was regarded in a spiritual aspect by the people; for, instead of seizing Him as a public disturber, they only asked, by what prophetic or supernatural authority He acted. "What *sign* showest thou, seeing that thou doest these things?" It is equally evident, from the language of Nicodemus, the pharisee and ruler (thus having the authority of both sect and office), that the same impression was made on the hierarchy. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher *come from*

God, for no man can do those miracles[1] that thou doest, except God be with him."

I need not remind the readers of theology, in what perplexities the commentators have involved the motives, the character, and the objects of Nicodemus; or how striking a proof the whole text supplies, of the advantage of preferring the simplicity of Scripture to the subtleties of man. Nicodemus, from his subsequent conduct, was evidently of a timid and narrow nature. But his coming to Jesus *by night*, might well be accounted for by the object of his inquiry. If he came to ascertain the approach of the kingdom of the Messiah, of all objects the most interesting to the Jewish nation; he came to ascertain an event the most hazardous of all, while a Roman governor ruled over Judea. It was under this very hazard, that the Jewish council subsequently attempted to justify the destruction of Jesus. "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation[2]."

The kingdom of heaven was the substantial object of the whole preaching of John. "Repent ye, for the

[1] The word is remarkable, σημεῖα. The same word which was used in the demand of the people for a *sign*. Nicodemus regarded our Lord as having already given, in the expulsion from the Temple, the sufficient sign of his authority, and in this the priesthood had coincided.

[2] John xi.

kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our Lord, in commencing his mission, had repeated the proclamation. The first expression of Nicodemus, his addressing Jesus as a *prophet*, naturally implies, that he came to consult Him on a subject of inspired communication; "*We know* that thou art a prophet." Perhaps we may not go too far, in conceiving, that he came as a delegate from the priesthood. But the first words of our Lord disclose the true purport of his inquiry. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again[3], he cannot enter into the *kingdom of God*."

The Jewish conception of the kingdom of God is well known to have been, a temporal restoration of the throne of David, a popular emancipation from the yoke of the stranger, and the full enjoyment of earthly supremacy. To this scene of splendour and sovereignty every descendant of Abraham was presumed to be entitled, by the simple circumstance of his descent; with, perhaps, some slight religious preliminary; and in this conception the nation had crowded to the Baptism of John.

Our Lord undeceives the inquirer at once, by telling him, that the mere fact of being a Jew is wholly insufficient; he must be "born again." The

[3] This translation is inexact; it should be "from above" (ἄνωθεν). When Nicodemus speaks of the New Birth, he uses the words "a second time," δεύτερον. When our Lord repeats the reference to the New Birth, He repeats ἄνωθεν.

declaration is so startling to all the prejudices of Nicodemus, that, from this moment, he who came to inquire refuses to believe ; and contends with Jesus as a disputant, whom he had but just acknowledged in the awful and transcendant character of a Prophet.

It is of importance for the clearing of this great subject to observe, that the *essential* to the entrance into the kingdom is declared by our Lord to be—Regeneration. " Except a man *be born again* he cannot see the kingdom of God." Our Lord does not name Baptism or the Holy Spirit. If the interview had ended here, we might have heard no more than the fact, that Regeneration was indispensable to man.

But, here is laid down the *principle ;* and the whole of the remaining detail is simply its expansion. It is observable, that the questions of the Jew, from this point, are *sceptical,* and strongly exhibit that mixture of stubbornness and shallowness which characterized the Pharisee. Nicodemus, on the mention of the New Birth, asks, in language almost amounting to a denial, " How can a man be born again, when he is old?" an obvious physical impossibility. Our Lord then says, that " unless a man be born of *water and the Spirit* he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ;" evidently, that the New Birth is *not* physical but *spiritual ;* and, he adds, that the spiritual is as *real* as the physical. " That which is born of the flesh (the birth by nature) is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit (the birth of grace) is Spirit :" as the parentage

and the offspring *are of the same kind* in the former instance, so are they in the latter.

It is especially observable, that the joint action of water and the Spirit is here decisively declared: and, that we have not the slightest intimation of any separate effect; they are not said to act at separate times; they are not two *births*, they are two agencies, combined to produce *one* birth, and that birth is Regeneration. It is quite clear from the context, that both are necessary. By what right, then, are we to separate them? or, if united, by what power can we suspend the result of their union?

Our Lord then adds, "Marvel not[4], that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind[5] bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Marvel not; answer me by no perplexities from physical objects, as you have already done. It is an operation above human knowledge. What does man know of the cause, or the course of the wind? Yet who can doubt its existence? Such is the agency

[4] *Θαυμάσῃς.* Sometimes expressive of ignorant perplexity.

[5] It is remarkable, that the same word, *πνεῦμα*, is used for the Divine Spirit, and for the wind. The same use holds in the Latin "Spiritus," as if the atmosphere were in some degree an emblem of the Divine Spirit, in its invisibility, its universality, and its power. We can thus also see the singular and immediate appropriateness of the illustration.

of the Holy Spirit; wholly beyond the conception of man; a Being of whose operations you can know nothing but the existence. The Jew now asks, "*How* can those things be?" This is not an enquiry, but an objection; "they are impossible."

Our Lord then rebukes his ignorance of the national doctrine, "that a proselyte was like a new-born babe," (a doctrine which the Jews held so strongly, that in some instances they regarded the Baptism as extinguishing all his former relationships.) "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not those things?" Christ then speaks on his own authority, "Verily, I say unto you, we speak that we do *know*, and testify that we have *seen;* and (yet) ye receive not our witness." He then still more forcibly exposes the inconsistency of the enquirer.—I have now told you facts of my own knowledge, yet you will not believe Me. But if, in things connected with the present condition of man, such as the means of entrance into the Kingdom of God, you thus refuse to receive my testimony; how can you receive my testimony on the subject for which you sought me, a condition of things so remote from human conceptions, as the Kingdom of God? "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

For, that knowledge is wholly beyond man, it belongs on earth only to one being; and to him by his dwelling in heaven, a condition wholly incommunicable to

existing human nature. "No man hath ascended up into heaven" to obtain that knowledge, "but He that came down from heaven: even the Son of Man which is in heaven[6]."

The testimony of Scriptural texts to the existence of Regeneration is ample. The result of the combined action of water and the Holy Spirit, is always either implied or distinctly stated, as a direct and real new birth of our spiritual being. It is not Conversion, which is the work of argument, aided by Divine Grace; nor Renovation, which is the work of human resolve, aided by the same Spirit; it is the possession of a new faculty of holiness, which is entirely beyond human nature, and is communicated solely in the act of Baptism.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all creatures: he that believeth, and is baptized, *shall be saved*[7]."

This command obviously referred to adults, and required previous belief; but the Baptism which was additional to that belief, and necessary to its producing the capability of an entrance into the kingdom, was evidently identical with Regeneration.

"We have all of us been baptized by one Spirit into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." In other words; by Baptism we are no longer the Jew disdaining the Gentile, or the Gentile

[6] John iii. [7] Matt. xvi.

insulting the Jew; we have become united in Christ, one body, one mind.—A change of the most powerful and complete character, a new state of being, a Regeneration.

"Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here is a definite effect, fixed to a definite time, and that effect, the miraculous gifts, distinctly connected with the act of Baptism.

"Baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Here Baptism is the instrument of salvation, the Apostle explaining that this Baptism is more than the visible act, or mere washing of the flesh, but implies a new state of the conscience, a new spiritual birth, Regeneration.

"Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word."

"For we ourselves, also, were sometime (formerly) foolish, disobedient, deceived . . . . . living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Thus describing the unregenerate state, the Apostle contrasts it with the regenerate: "But, after the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, (not by works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy) He saved us,

by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost[8]."

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?"—"Therefore were they thus buried, that, as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life."

By Baptism, the converts had entered into a new condition of existence, having died to their former nature; and the Apostle here exhorts them to make their conduct conformable to their new state: "For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection."

Having by baptism passed away from the old being and assumed the new, the Christian should reckon himself "to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ[9]." Such is the effect of Baptism; an act with which is thus identified a change on earth similar to that beyond the grave,—a new commencement of spiritual being.

Those passages are given, not as evidences for Infant Baptism, for they all refer to previous faith and repentance; but as evidences for the direct connexion of Baptism with Regeneration; the mention of Baptism being always joined with spiritual change.

The cavil, that baptized infants often grow up into

[8] Tit. iii. 3, &c. [9] Rom. xi. 4, &c.

worthless men, may be equally urged against any gift of Providence. How many squander away every advantage of both mind and body. How many degrade rank, disgrace honourable birth, and make hereditary wealth a bane. May not the highest gifts of the Spirit also be thus thrown away? Did not Peter deny Christ? Did not Judas betray him? Did not the Corinthians bring down the rebuke of St. Paul for their offences against the gifts of the Holy Ghost? and did not St. Paul feel the necessity of a struggle against himself, lest he should be "a cast away?" "Quench not the Spirit." If the Spirit may be quenched, may not Regeneration be extinguished?

But, why is Regeneration essential to the entrance into the Kingdom? That question is not to be answered by the narrowness of human knowledge; we might as justly ask, why is it that "flesh and blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of Christ?" "why has man been created?"

Why, then, is its existence revealed to us? One reason, at least, is known; that, as there is now an invisible Regeneration, there shall yet be a visible one; that, at the latter day, in the second Advent, the living race of Christianity shall visibly and instantaneously begin a new existence, without tasting of the grave, "in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, when the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (the living) shall be changed[1];" when the

[1] 1 Cor. xv.

promises to the Apostles shall be realized, and when the earth shall be the Lord's.

"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed Me;—in the Regeneration[2], when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This consummation of glory is not limited to the Apostles: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life[3]."

If there were to be no Regeneration until the second Advent, the millions of Christians who have died since the Apostolic age, must obviously be excluded from that Kingdom which is to be entered by the regenerate alone. Therefore there is a previous and actual Regeneration for every Christian who goes down to the grave; by which he is entitled to be a sharer in the final and visible "manifestation of the sons of God."

And this is the direct language of the Apostle: "He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and

[2] It has been rashly conjectured, that this sentence should be read, "Ye who have followed me in the Regeneration," as if the preaching of the Gospel were the Regeneration. But, though Baptism is pronounced, the λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσίας, (Titus iii.) "Regeneration" is never applied to the mere preaching of the Gospel.

[3] Matt. xix. 28.

hath anointed us, is God, who also hath *sealed us*[4];" "That in the dispensation of the *fulness of times* He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth; in whom also we have obtained an *inheritance*."—The promise *unperformed*, but yet secure. . . . . "In whom also, after ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of *promise* which is the *earnest of our inheritance*, *until* the *redemption* of the purchased possession[5];"—until that distant, but express, day of fulfilment, in the Kingdom.

The new birth by the Holy Spirit, Regeneration, is given to us here as a sign and security of that inheritance, which the Christian shall receive at the second Advent.

The whole epistle speaks with the same reference to Regeneration, as a *seal*, the evidence and pledge of a future possession. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of *redemption*[6]." "Ye have received the spirit of *adoption*, whereby we cry Abba, Father[7];" a metaphor taken from that Jewish, or Roman, adoption of the child, which was effected at the moment; the possession of the inheritance, being thus rendered certain, though it was future. Thus, the Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, through Baptism, which constitutes the Chris-

[4] 2 Cor. i. 21.
[5] Ephes. i. 13, &c.
[6] C. iv.
[7] Rom. viii.

tian adoption, precedes, and secures the ultimate possession of the Christian inheritance.

We find this distinction carried through the highest events of the Gospel history. Christ declared, that at the Transfiguration He would be seen "coming in his Kingdom." He there appeared in glory, and thus gave unquestionable proof of the reality of his second coming; yet in the subsequent prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem, He declared, that He should *not* visibly come, until the nation hailed Him as the Messiah. At the Ascension, He declared, that "all power was given unto Him in heaven and earth;" and in that pledge his Apostles were sent forth to summon the world to his allegiance. But, the *visible* possession of that power still awaits the time, when the "Son shall come in the glory of his Father, with his holy an els."

The Regeneration of the Christian in every passing age is real; yet is only preliminary to a period, when the living Church will be instantly and visibly changed into immortals, and when Regeneration will be Glory.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROVIDENTIAL LAW OF BAPTISM.

That God acts by general laws in Physical Nature, is proved by experience; that He also acts by general laws in Moral Nature, has the strongest probability, from the course of things. The first value of this knowledge in both instances to man, is—that it tends constantly to sustain a sense of the Divine government, constantly to convince him of a Divine plan in this world, and constantly to impress his understanding and his heart with homage to the great Governor of all.

It has a secondary, but most important effect, in its consolation to the heart of man, struggling through the inequalities of the world; in its assurance of irresistible protection to patient virtue; and in its proof that man is not delivered up to chance here or hereafter.

If the countless millions of stars are inhabited, (and who shall deny it, when we see every leaf in our globe teeming with existence?)—if the whole

character of creation is the diffusion of happiness,—if "God is Love,"—may not every orb of those millions have its *especial* display of the Divine benevolence; each forming some great and characteristic scene of the triumph of good; and each exhibiting some peculiar and magnificent guiding principle?

In our world, that guiding principle has been Religion.

A glance at the history of mankind will show, that all its substantial changes; all those great revolutions, too profound and too broad for human means; all those tides of human impulse, which have been in movement from the beginning, and which will be in movement to the last times of the earth; have been, dependent on Religion.

Religion was the pledge, given in Paradise, for the universal happiness of mankind.

Its loss brought death into the world.

The recovery of Religion, under the covenant of sacrifice, rescued mankind from immediate extinction after the Fall.

Its loss brought the deluge on the earth, and extinguished mankind, with the exception of the family of Noah.

The recovery of Religion by the covenant of Noah restored the world.

Its loss, after the dispersion, was followed by the general guilt, misery, and infatuation, known under the name of Heathenism.

The recovery of Religion, by the direct Providence of God, in the call of Abraham, formed the Jewish commonwealth: with it displayed the Divine interposition among men, the power of miracle, the power of prophecy; and gave those pledges of Divine consummation which form to this hour the hope of mankind.

Its loss destroyed the Jewish commonwealth, scattered the nation, and left it under an anathema through all the ages since its ruin.

The recovery of Religion, in Christianity, gave the world a new system of morals. Faith, Hope, and Charity became principles of action. Immortality was brought nearer to the mind. Heathenism fell; civilization received a new and nobler form; and a new ardour, and a new success marked the progress of mankind.

Its loss, in the middle ages, stopped the whole intellectual and moral growth of Europe. The period of national ignorance, of reckless vice, of gross superstition, and of priestly power, known under the general name of Popery, was the direct result of this loss in the most active and intelligent quarter of the globe.

The recovery of Religion, in the German Reformation, restored the exhausted energies of Europe, relaid the foundations of European freedom, renewed the productive intercourse of the world, urged the spread of all the knowledge important to the advance of nations, softened the temper of thrones,

created popular rights, extinguished the system of inveterate hostilities, and, in our day, exchanged it for a general and noble zeal in the propagation of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Those results and contrasts are undeniable. No man who has ever read history, or is capable of drawing a conclusion from history, can, by possibility, doubt them. They are demonstrative: Religion has been the prime mover of the world.

Baptism is one of the laws of Religion. It has the regularity, the permanence, and the universality of law. It is as old as the creation; has been carried through every era of man; and will crown the consummation of all things. Baptism is at once a purification and a dedication. Seven successive forms of Baptism are declared in the Scriptures.

The Baptism of the globe by water and the Holy Spirit, at the Creation.

The Baptism of the globe by the Deluge.

The Baptism of Israel in the Red Sea.

The Baptism of Israel in the river Jordan.

The Baptism of Israel by John.

The Baptism by the Holy Spirit and by fire at the Pentecost.

The Baptism of the globe by fire, at the second coming of our Lord.

The first Baptism. On the formation of the globe, while it was still without form and void, it was covered

with water; "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

This united action of water and the Holy Spirit was evidently of such importance, as to be thought worthy of a Revelation; the only means by which it could ever have reached human knowledge; man not being then formed.

It was the primary act of God; the preparative of the world for man. No physical reason has ever been assigned, why the first covering of the globe should have been water; and no moral one, except for the purpose of its being joined with the Holy Spirit. We have also no instance in Scripture of that united action of water and the Holy Spirit, but for purification and dedication.—The globe, intended for the dwelling of a sinless and God-adoring race of beings, was *baptized*.

It is true, that mere Matter can have no relation to vice or virtue. Yet, it has constantly been the Divine will, to declare a connexion between the state of man and the state of the globe. Thus, at the fall, the earth was "cursed" for his sake. Thus, after the Deluge, when the Noachic covenant was given, the curse was withdrawn. And thus, the Apostle pronounces the earth to be now feeling the calamities of man, and "groaning" for the day when its burthen shall be removed, and the "sons of God" shall be "manifested."

The second Baptism was by the deluge, in which Noah and his family were saved, to renew the population of the world. In the language of the Apostle,

" the like figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth now save us[1]."

The guilt of the antediluvian world had been universal: violence reigned upon the earth; and the longevity of man tended to render the lesson of his mortality unavailing. The successive generations, stained with the vices of their fathers, must constantly sink deeper into iniquity. To meet this evil, extinction for the present race, and the shortening of life for the future, were the Divine expedients. After a warning of a hundred and twenty years, the deluge buried mankind.

But there was evidently more intended by this form of ruin, than the mere ruin. There might have been a thousand ways of destroying the living generation—a simoom, a pestilence, even a slight change in the constituents of the atmosphere, might have struck down all mankind at the instant; it seems also not improbable, that but a small portion of the globe was inhabited, from the slow encrease of the antediluvian population. But, the burying of the whole globe in water was essential to the purification of the whole.

The earth was *baptized*, for a new career of man. On its restoration from the deluge, a new covenant was made by God; a perpetual and conspicuous sign of that covenant, the bow in the cloud, was given; and it was declared, that whatever might be the offences of the human race, the deluge should return no more.

[1] 1 Pet. iii.

No analogy can be closer to the whole course of man himself—a state of original sin; the curse of that sin requiring a purification by water; a renewed existence before God by Baptism, a new covenant; a perpetual pledge of that covenant; and the commencement of a new career, exposed to the diversities of good and ill, until all is finished in the grave; itself only the beginning of another existence of unmixed glory.

The third Baptism was the passage of the Red Sea.

"All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all *baptized* to Moses in the cloud and in the sea [2]."

Within five hundred years of the deluge, that awful lesson had been forgotten; and mankind, spreading through the world, had fallen into new forms of evil. The crime of the antediluvian world had been violence, the guilt of the passions. The crime of the postdiluvian world had been idolatry, the guilt of the understanding. For the former, which brutalized man, there was but one remedy, extinction; for the latter there was but one remedy —the elevation of the understanding by the knowledge of God.

To give this knowledge, an expedient of conspicuous wisdom was adopted. From one pair, as in the origin of mankind, a nation was to be formed, whose express purpose was the preservation of the true idea

[2] 1 Cor. x. 12.

of God. The whole history of Israel was a succession of the exclusive agencies of Providence, in its protections, its miracles, its chastisements, its rewards, the inflictions of its justice, and the promises of its mercy. All was a continued assertion of the Divine rule over man. Separated from all other examples of human fortune, or national existence, by the three grand features, of a Divine law, a Divine conquest, and a Divine Sovereignty; the history of Israel was a great chart of revealed Providence; a translation for all ages of that mysterious language in which the government of God speaks to man; an opening of those sublime obscurities, which to the human eye rest on the steps of Him "Who maketh darkness his pavilions, dark waters, and clouds of the skies."

Israel, after the slow growth of four centuries, and the stern training of Egyptian bondage, was at length summoned to commence its career, as a nation devoted to the service of God. For this high office the appointed preparative was a National Baptism; and, as if to give the fullest evidence of providential will in the choice of the preparative, that Baptism was to be by *miracle*.

That Omnipotence might have chosen among ten thousand ways, is a truism. That the people might have been rescued by a sign from heaven, that any one of the ten plagues again let loose over Egypt might have paralyzed all its hostility; that a thunder storm might have blasted Pharaoh and all his horse-

men, or that the pillar of cloud which bewildered the Egyptian pursuit at the Red Sea, might have covered the Israelite march round the head of the Gulph, are all obvious. But none of those would have been Baptism, and Baptism was the instrument demanded for the purification and dedication of the people.

Thus, the march of the Israelites was led, against all the probabilities of warlike guidance or popular will, along the shore of the Red Sea. Thus, they were led through the waters by the Divine presence, and thus, they were "baptized in the cloud and in the sea."

It is to be remembered, that Israel had already a distinguishing Sign, as the descendants of Abraham; had been formed into a Church by the Communion of the Passover; and had received the most resistless proofs of Divine protection, in the plagues inflicted on its oppressors. Still, one thing more was essential to the full commencement of its powers and blessings; and that one thing was Baptism; and it was given by the direct act of Deity.

The Fourth Baptism was the passage of the river Jordan.

Strong as are the proofs of the necessity of Baptism given by the passage of the Red Sea, they are even strengthened by the mighty miracle which preceded the possession of Canaan. That possession had been promised to the people, under the guidance of Moses. And after the giving of the law, they would have at

once received the promised inheritance, but for their rebellion. They were thenceforth sentenced to die in the wilderness. Their Baptism was thus thrown away; its preparative for the qualities which were to sustain them as a nation was lost; and of that mighty multitude which had been sanctified through the Red Sea, but two individuals were ever to enter Canaan. The whole living generation remained *unbaptized.*

But Baptism was essential to the vast change, implied in the transition from the wilderness into the sovereignty of Palestine. It is acknowledged, that the sojourn in the wilderness offered a national education, such as no other scene on earth could have offered—in the continual operation of miracle, in the teaching of Moses, in the sublime guidance of the fiery pillar, in the hardihood of a mountain life, and even in the elevation of the mind, trained by the grandeur of nature; the whole solemnly concluded by the line drawn in the grave between the ancient slaves of Egypt and the young and free natives of the desert. Yet, the period of the sojourn, except the giving of the Law, was evidently a blank in the national existence. The history constantly reverts to the former Baptism, as if to establish the identity of purpose in both. It is not until the actual encampment of Israel in Canaan, that the nation is declared to be free from the shame of Egyptian bondage. Forty years had passed, since an Israelite had heard the sound of an

Egyptian manacle; yet the interval was of no historic effect. It was only after the actual entrance into Canaan, that the Lord said, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you;" and the declaration was commemorated by giving a name to the place where it was made, "Gilgal [3]."

Even the connexion of the two Baptisms forms a part of the instruction which the people are to give to their posterity.

"Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God *did to the Red Sea*, which He dried up from before us, until we were passed over [4]."

All the leading features of both are strikingly, and of course intentionally, similar. Moses encamps on the shore of the Red Sea; predicts the destruction of the Egyptians while the people are trembling at the thunder of their chariots and cavalry; and promises their deliverance by miracle.

Joshua encamps on the bank of Jordan, there is told, "that the Lord hath delivered into the hand of Israel all the land; for all the hearts of the country did faint because of them;" and he there commands Israel to prepare for a Divine interposition. "*Sanctify* yourselves, for to-morrow ye shall see wonders."

[3] Rolling.

[4] Josh. iv. 22.

At the Red Sea the pillar of cloud and fire, which till then had led the way, moved back, when the people began to enter the sea, to cover their march from the pursuit. In the passage of the Jordan, the ark, the place of "Him that sitteth between the cherubim," led the way, at a distance of two thousand cubits below the host; but when it reached the brink of the river, and the feet of the priests who bore it touched the stream, they were commanded to stand still, until the whole body of the people had passed.

If the object had been merely to carry the Israelite multitude into Canaan, it might, and would, have been effected by simpler means, for Providence wastes no power. The Jewish leader might have reached fords higher up the river, or he might have waited until the mountain floods went down. Before him were the Canaanite and Amorite armies, a strong city, and a hostile land, all to be reached only through a broad torrent, swollen with the snows of Lebanon.

But the passage by a ford would have had no resemblance to the march through a sea; there would have been no miracle, and no identification of purpose. The standing of the water in heaps, the march through the bed of a torrent, the peril, the preservation, and the sacred triumph of a new, a difficult, and a magnificent enterprise, were all demanded by the connexion of the two Baptisms.

The fifth Baptism announced the mission of the Messiah.

The besetting sin of the Jewish people, in their latter day, was spiritual pride; their besetting prejudice was a fatal belief in the temporal restoration of the kingdom of David; and both issued in popular vices, which left them no alternative but repentance or ruin. Their holiness was hypocrisy; their zeal, the struggle of sects; and their patriotism, a hatred of the Roman. At this crisis of the nation, John appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming the advent of the Messiah, and summoning Israel to Baptism "for the remission of sins."

Isaiah, eight hundred years before, had delivered the singular prediction, that a "Voice from the wilderness should proclaim the approach of the Lord." Malachi, four hundred years before, had closed the book of prophecy by declaring, that the King of all "should suddenly come to His temple."

It is among the most striking instances of prophetic fulfilment, that the character of John should have so completely corresponded to the idea of a "Voice." His mission was almost wholly limited to the proclamation of the Messiah. He uttered no prophecies, in the ordinary sense of the word; he wrought no miracles; he exercised none of those powerful interpositions in the councils of the great, or those fearful ministrations of judgments on the people, which had so largely formed the office of the ancient pro-

phets. When Judea had heard the proclamation, and received the preparative, the office of this memorable man was done. Though still in the vigour of life, his course was closed, his bold spirit was withdrawn, and he died, only displaying his holy intrepidity in the defiance of a tyrant and the defence of virtue.

It is scarcely a less striking instance of the connexion existing in the providential purposes, that John's summons to the national baptism was given from the *eastern side* of Jordan, at the precise spot where Israel had encamped, before its miraculous passage. Bethabara, where the people, with Joshua at their head, crossed the river, was the scene of John's baptism, and he there opened the way to a new and nobler Canaan.

Our Lord came to the baptism of John; but his baptism was evidently of a distinct and a totally superior order; it was predictive in all its characteristics, and a type of the baptism of the Pentecost. As the perfect Baptism of Christianity was to be given in the name of the Holy Trinity; the three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, were present at this baptism, by the Voice from Heaven, by Christ, and by the emblematic Dove.

The descent of the Holy Spirit was seen by John *alone*, and by him for the purpose of personal conviction. "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see

the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost[5]." If this glorious sight had been visible to the multitude, they *must* have offered Him instant homage; no prejudice could have resisted the Sign from Heaven; as no unbelief could have refused to hear the voice of God. The Sign which they always demanded, would then have been given to them. But its results might have been a national revolt, which would have laid them at the mercy of the Roman sword.

It is characteristic, that John, with the descent of the Spirit in full force upon his mind, yet points out Christ to His disciples, not as the King, but as the Sacrifice; not as the Messiah, but as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world."

The Sixth Baptism was the proclamation of Christianity.

As the Baptism of John was, in a certain degree, connected with that of Israel at the entrance into Canaan; the Baptism of the Pentecost was announced by John. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

The most comprehensive and wonder-working of all the changes of mankind had now commenced—

[5] John i. 32.

the conversion of the world.—The Gospel was to be given to the Gentiles.

It was probable, that for a purpose of this magnitude and difficulty, new and extraordinary powers would be required. The propagation of a religion was new in the world. Judæism made but few proselytes, heathenism wanted none. Preaching was unused by both. It was now to be the great instrument of the Gospel.

The declaration of John, that Christ should baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire," was now partially fulfilled; but though the gifts of the Pentecost were astonishing instances of power, the discourse of St. Peter to the people points to a period of still larger and more illustrious fulfilment. The Apostle, in vindicating the gift of tongues, refers to the prophecy of Joel: "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon *all flesh*; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." But those outpourings of the Holy Spirit were to be connected with events of the greatest magnitude and the most overwhelming change.

"I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come."

In the known language of prophecy, the fall of the heavenly bodies denotes the fall of kingdoms; and the fall is here universal. But, no convulsion of any magnitude accompanied the Pentecost. Even the fall of Jerusalem, in forty years after, though a most awful instance of divine wrath, cannot fulfil so vast a prediction of overthrow. Yet we find the language of the prophet repeated in every instance where prediction reaches to the Second Advent.

Thus Malachi: "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch [6]."

Thus John: "He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

Thus our Lord: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven [7]."

[6] chap. iv.

[7] Matt. xxiv.

Thus John, in the Apocalypse: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

It is impossible to reconcile the force of those solemn and fearful declarations with the *first* Advent of Him, who declared that He was come not to *condemn* the world, but that the world through Him might be *saved*. But the contrast of those prophecies with the character of our Lord, developes a striking principle in the history of his mission.—The First Advent is a type of the Second; all its leading events, excepting the Crucifixion, being repeated, but on a broader and more conspicuous scale.

Thus, John came "in the spirit of Elijah."—But in the Second Advent, Elijah himself shall come, and restore all things.

Thus, the Transfiguration showed Christ in his glory, but only in night, with but Moses and Elijah, as his angels, and in the presence of but three of the disciples.—In the Second Advent, He shall be seen in the glory of his Father, with his hosts of angels, and descending before the eyes of all nations.

Thus, the entry of Christ into Jerusalem was the entry of its king, but without the attendant forms or evidence of royalty.—In the Second Advent He shall enter in unquestioned royalty, with the whole converted nation rejoicing before Him, surrounded with all the grandeur of earth, and hailed with the universal acclamation, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Thus, the Last Supper was held in obscurity with his disciples, whose especial character He pronounced to be that of "servants" to each other, and whose first duty was to be their submission to suffering like his own.—But, in the Second Advent, He announces to them the banquet of kings. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

And thus, the miraculous gifts of the Pentecost, though unanswerable proofs of Divine interposition, are to be regarded as a *pledge* of the effusion of the Holy Spirit in the days yet to come. The tongues of fire descended but on a portion of the disciples; and this visible Baptism of fire was *never* renewed. The miraculous gifts, though astonishing and widely extended, were still partial in power and limited in duration, and were thus incommensurate to a prophecy, which promised gifts universal, and apparently perpetual.

The language of St. Paul establishes alike the fact of the past, and of the future. The gifts of the Apostolic age were appointed to decay. "Whether they be prophecies, they shall fail; whether they be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." And he assigns the reason of their limited duration, to their comparative imperfection, and their being to be yet followed by perfection: "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in *part* is done away." He then contrasts the present gifts with the future, as the thoughts of a child with those of a man: "When I was a child I thought as a child." Even with all the powers of miracle, he yet saw "but through a glass, darkly:" but when the promised day should come, he was to see through no obscuring medium of imperfection; but, as one sees "face to face[8]." This consummate capacity of intellectual and moral faculties is to be given in the Kingdom of Christ. It is a common error to conceive, that it refers to Heaven, in the usual meaning of the place of the Divine presence. We have no revelation, which carries the mind further than the Kingdom of Christ, the judgment, and the knowledge, that at its close, God shall be "all in all."

The gifts of miracle communicated to the disciples in the first age form one of the most eminent fea-

[8] In the casements of Greece and Italy *talc* was frequently used, which obscured the light, and made external objects imperfect.

tures of Christianity. They also form an exclusive one; for, excepting Judaism, they belonged to no other religion; and, even in Judaism, were given to man only in the instance of that prophetic period, which was interposed between the decline of Jewish and the origin of Christian knowledge. The subject appears to be capable of larger illustration than it has yet found; and may yet furnish one of the most important testimonies to the truth of Christianity. But, here I must give only a glance.

In the first mission of the Apostles to the Jews, their preaching was sustained by gifts of miracle; but those were wholly connected with the body:—"As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils [9]." The gifts to the Seventy were of the same order.

After the resurrection, Christ committed his mission to the Apostles: "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you:" giving them, at the same time, power over the mind,—"Whose soever *sins* ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained [10]." Immediately before the ascension, He appeared to the Eleven, and predicted a new extent of miraculous power, to be communicated no longer to the Apostles alone, but to their converts among both Jews and Gentiles. "And these signs

[9] Matt. x. [10] John xx.

shall follow *them that believe*; In my name shall they cast out devils; *they shall speak with new tongues;* they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover[1]." A totally *new* gift, was here promised, the gift of tongues, which would have been unnecessary to Jews preaching in their own country, but which was of the first necessity where their mission extended through the world. The fulfilment of this promise was appointed for the Pentecost.

But, on that most memorable day, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were not only more largely given, but were of another order. They were more than mere capacities of external power; they were new elevations and energies of the individual intellect. Those have been named by St. Paul, "the Word of wisdom; the Word of knowledge; Faith; Prophecy; and the Discerning of Spirits; with Divers kinds of tongues; and the faculty of interpreting those Tongues; all in addition to the former gifts of Healing; and the working of Miracles.

The gradation is striking;—from the gifts first relating to the body, limited to the Apostles, then extended to the Seventy, but, in both, temporary; next spiritual, but limited to the Apostles; finally, intellectual and bodily, but extended to the general

[1] Mark xvi.

Church. Each successive transmission of gifts being thus adapted to meet the larger necessity, and the changed condition of the religion; yet, in the end, when the first general impression was made by the Gospel on Heathenism, to pass away; and, within a single generation, commit Christianity to the effect of that impression, and to the natural progress of reason and virtue in the human mind. In all this high proceeding we can still trace the great principle of the providential government—never to waste power, yet never to exhibit a deficiency of power; to suffer no essential impulse to be wanting, yet to suffer no superfluity; to control free agency to the extent that is required for the good of man, but to leave its action to effect all that it is adequate to perform; to vindicate the character of Divine interposition when it is necessary, but to withdraw its instruments when they may be exchanged for the common means of man.

It is also fully consistent with the providential government, that the age immediately preceding the second Advent should witness a restoration of the gifts of the Pentecost, and witness that restoration on a still more illustrious scale. That age is predicted to be one plunged in iniquity, and bearing the strongest semblance to the desperate vice, and daring violences, of the antediluvian world.

"This know," says the Apostle, "that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be

lovers of their ownselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good; traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God[2]."

It is scarcely possible to conceive a human crime, or a Satanic temptation, which does not come within this tremendous category.

Yet, as there is always a certain similarity of purpose, whatever may be the diversity of means, in the divine action, nothing could be more probable than a divine interposition, to rescue mankind in their last extremity. Nothing could be more conformable to the whole history of the providential government, than a great future mission of inspired teachers; even as Noah was given as a "preacher of righteousness" to the final generation of the antediluvian world.

But, for this high purpose, *no* revival of the *physical* gifts of the Pentecost is promised. The demand is spiritual, and the gifts will be spiritual. "Your sons and your daughters shall *prophesy*." Thus the gift which St. Paul directed the converts especially to solicit, as the most effective of all, shall be the especial gift of the Church in the last days. 'Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may *pro-*

[2] 1 Tim. iii.

phesy[3]. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the *Church*[4]."

I press this distinction the more, from its striking proof of the consistency of the whole providential system. The gifts of the early Church, so far as they were applied to the relief of human infirmity, to safety among barbarian tribes, or to the command of the various languages of a thinly peopled globe, would be almost superfluous, even in the existing condition of the world. But, in a century, or even in half a century hence, with the world constantly assuming a new aspect of population and power; with the tide of habitancy swelling to the ends of the earth; with the forest and the prairie resounding to the labours of man; with intercourse speeding through all nations, by inventions rivalling eagles' wings; with the Globe quartered among a few leading languages; with the forms of Religion encamped on every soil; with the art of Printing, the greatest civilizer and subduer of all; breaking down all the old barriers, or pouring forth perpetual streams of knowledge, and turning the parched and barren soil of the human mind into verdure and production; Where would be the necessity for the earlier gifts, astonishing as they were?

[3] Prophecy, in the New Testament, chiefly means inspired preaching.

[4] 1 Cor. iii.

The true gifts would be those which prepared Religion to meet this fierce and fervid temperament of the world; the strength for the "pulling down of strongholds:" the intelligence to open the eyes of nations; the fortitude to disdain the dungeon for the truth; the penetration to strip the heart of the voluptuary to his own startled gaze; the authority to force sullen avarice, and haughty ambition, and cold-blooded selfishness, and stony-hearted pride, to see their sentence written in the grave at their feet; and, above all, the gift, to create a new conscience in the scoffer; and make the lips, which came to cry, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!" humbly utter, "Lord! remember me, when thou comest to thy kingdom." And this is the whole order of gifts contained in the original promise, and renewed in the Apostolical promise of the last days. "On my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out, in those days, of my spirit, and they shall prophesy [5]." When this final effort shall be complete the door of the Christian ark will be shut, and the great convulsion will begin. "And I will work wonders in Heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour, and smoke."

On this awful period it may be important to remind even our present generation, that whatever may have been the public confusions of our period, none

[5] Joel ii. 28.

of them bear the character of those final struggles; that all the calculations have been premature; that they are *all* hopeless, and that they have even been virtually forbidden by the declaration, that the *time* is unknown to angels, and is wholly reserved in the councils of Omnipotence [6].

It is not less striking, that the especial subject of Infidelity, in those days, will be the Second Advent, "Where is the promise of his coming?" and that the Apostle rebukes this general scoff, by reminding mankind that the Globe has already undergone two great changes; the first, the sanctification by water at the Creation; the second, the destruction and sanctification by water at the Deluge. The third is to come, and is to purify the earth by fire. "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment (condemnation [7]), and perdition of ungodly men [8]."

The seventh and last Baptism shall, like the first, be the Baptism of the Globe.

When the long career of human iniquity shall have thus been closed; when Christ shall have triumphed where He suffered; and when He shall have achieved his last earthly conquest, the extinction of Death; the Globe will, for the third time, be purified,—but by fire; and purified to receive a sinless race of im-

[6] Mark xiii. 32. [7] κρίσεως. [8] 2 Pet. iii.

mortals;—"Looking for and hasting to the coming of *the* Day of God; wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless *we*, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness[9]."

In tracing this whole vast succession, there is nothing imaginary. All is fact, and fact authenticated by Scripture. There is a plan, and it is by the regularity belonging to a plan, that the Almighty, in all his works, addresses Himself to the convictions of the human understanding. Wherever this regularity can be proved, the evidence that there is a Supreme Director of the world is irresistible.

There are thus four Baptisms of man, on the largest scale, in all the great religious Eras of the world—a Baptism of Israel redeemed from bondage—a Baptism of Israel entering on the land of promise—a Baptism of the Jews, on the preaching of the Gospel to Judah—and a Baptism by the Holy Ghost, on the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles. And, in each instance, the baptism has received the Divine illustration of Miracle.

There are thus also, three Baptisms of the Globe, taken in the sense of a world in some degree sharing even in the good and ill of man. In the first, "God saw every thing that He had made, and behold, it

[9] 2 Pet. iii.

was *very good*[1]." In the next the declaration was made, distinguishing man from the earth, yet describing *both* as corrupted. "God looked upon the earth, and behold *it* was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

On the restoration from the Deluge, "The Lord said in his heart, I will not *curse the ground* any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Man is no longer formed as Adam, upright; but as Adam fallen.

The third Baptism is to be final, the Baptism by fire.

In this succession of the Baptisms of the Globe we may observe another evidence of regularity, a singular correspondence with the three successive conditions of man. It is first baptized for a race of man, sinless, yet liable to sin. Next, for a race of man, the "imagination of whose heart is evil from his youth," a race born in sin, and sinning continually. Finally, for a race relieved from sin, and to sin no more, "a world in which dwelleth righteousness[2]."

[1] Genesis i.

[2] The argument of this chapter, succinctly stated, has been lately given in a sermon preached in St. Stephen's, Walbrook, and published by Kenrick, Walbrook.

CHAPTER V.

THE FORMS OF BAPTISM.

THOSE forms are Sprinkling, Immersion, and Affusion.

The use of water as an emblem of spiritual purification, belonged to the earliest period of the Mosaic code. It was thus commanded, "Thou shalt make a laver of brass, for Aaron and his sons shall wash their feet thereat, when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, *that they die not*[1]." So important was the ablution deemed, and so perilous its neglect.

And this custom of ablution extended to all things connected with the public worship. In the building of the Temple by Solomon, the provision for this part of the ceremonial was large and costly. "He made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, ... and it received and held three thousand *baths*[2]. He made also ten *lavers*, and put five on the right

[1] Exod. xxx.

[2] The bath was seven gallons and two pints.

hand and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt-offering they washed in them. But the Sea (the principal laver) was for the priests to wash in [3]."

The Jewish custom, in later times, was to multiply those ablutions, which they expressed by "baptizing." The word (to dip) βάπτω occurs but thrice in the New Testament, and never with reference to a sacred purpose. Varying as may be the sense of words in a popular language, there can be no question, that to baptize (βαπτίζω) was used even in the common use of water for washing the hands before meals [4], the water being poured out on the hands by an attendant; as we may presume, from the customary manner at this day.

In the Temple service, *sprinkling* was the chief mode of purification. Oil, blood, and water, were severally used, the two former presumed to represent the anointing and atonement of Christ; the latter, the purification by the Holy Spirit. The blood showed how sin was to be expelled, the water how grace was to be renewed. In the consecration of Aaron, "Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and *sprinkled* it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him [5]." The purification of the Levites was also by *sprinkling*.

[3] 2 Chron. iv. [4] Luke xi. [5] Lev. viii.

"And thus shalt thou do unto them, to change them, sprinkle water of purifying upon them [6]." The leper was also purified by sprinkling [7]; and thus the Jews consecrated, or purified, tents, and cups, and persons who had touched the dead [8]. Pouring over the person was also frequent. "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him [9]." Thus was Aaron consecrated for the priestly office [1]; and thus was our Lord baptized with the Holy Spirit *descending on Him.* In fact, among the numberless purifications of the Jews, from the person of the high priest down to the vessels of the altar, or even to the common vessels of the table, all seem to have been performed by *sprinkling*, or pouring; and even the washings of the vessels of the table were called "baptisms" (*βαπτίσμους*) [2].

In the Old Testament, we have no evidence of immersion, unless we are to regard the passages of the Red Sea and of the river Jordan as immersions; which they certainly were not, in the ordinary sense of the word. In the New Testament the chief instances of baptism almost exclude the idea of immersion.

John summoned *all* Judea to his baptism; thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, obeyed the sum-

[6] Numb. viii. [7] Lev. xiv. [8] Numb. xix.
[9] Exod. xxix. [1] Lev. viii. [2] Mark vii.

mons. Can we conceive the Baptist to have been equal to the immersion of those multitudes?

At the Pentecost three thousand were baptized. Where was the river in Zion for their immersion? At Philippi, the gaoler and all his household were baptized. Did the Apostle defer this baptism until the day, or lead them forth to the public bath, or the river? They were all baptized at *midnight*, and in the *gaol*. When St. Peter found his last scruple of receiving the Gentiles removed by seeing the gifts of the Holy Spirit poured upon Cornelius, his language is, "Who shall forbid water, that these may be baptized?" He does not say, Come forth to the next public fountain, or the next stream.

Even in the instance of the Ethiopian baptized by Philip, which bears the nearest resemblance to immersion, the evidence may easily be questioned. The Ethiopian, convinced of the Gospel, and taught the necessity of Baptism; on seeing water by the road side, a rivulet, or possibly a pond, desires to be baptized at once. They both go down into the water, and Philip baptizes the convert. But we are told nothing of immersion; and when we know that baptism among the Jews so often implied only pouring, or washing with water; that we have no evidence of any immersion being in use among the Jews; that the Baptism of the Pentecost must have been without immersion; and consider the mere necessity of either divesting this distinguished personage of

his garments in an open road, and before the eyes of his own people, or plunging him in a rivulet, perhaps a ditch, in his garments, and leaving him to the hazards of their remaining upon him as he went on his journey; we may, without any straining of the sense, fully agree with those who conceive that the baptism was the same, which had been sufficient for the thousands on the day of Pentecost.

We are also to remember, on all such subjects, that difficulty, hazard, or even inconvenience, were wholly against the *principle* of the Christian ritual; and, that whatever may have been the subsequent passion for austerities, our Lord established none, sanctioned none, and suffered none. He even declared, that while He remained on earth, his disciples should *not fast*. The mere circumstance of the multitude who came to John's baptism being compelled either to throw off their garments at the river side, or remain in them after their immersion; would be a sufficient reason, in the absence of all assertion to the contrary, to conclude that they were only sprinkled [3].

But, the true question is not, whether immersion may be practised, but whether it is *essential*. To that question the answer has been now given. Yet it is acknowledged that immersion became a practice

[3] The usual remark that εἰς, in the text, may as well mean *to* the water, as *into* it, and that it is translated *at*, immediately after, is not of much weight; the coming up, ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος, shows that they had stood *in* the water.

of the Eastern Churches at an early period, and that it was generally regarded by them, and even by the Western, as the more perfect form of Baptism. But the immersion was not limited, as in later times, to adults; it was also applied to infants.

As the latter part of the first century had shattered the Church by heresies, the latter part of the second had corrupted it into superstitions. Thus Tertullian, still our chief authority on the subject, in speaking of Church traditions, states in detail, the customary form of Baptism in his day: "When we come to the water, we there, as we have done a little before in the congregation, under the hand of the Pastor, make a profession that we renounce the devil, and all his pomps, and his angels. Then we are three times plunged into the water, and we answer some few words more than our Saviour in his Gospel has enjoined. When we are taken up out of the water, we taste a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day we abstain for a week from bathing ourselves, which otherwise we do every day [4]." "They who come to Baptism must use the devotions of frequent prayer, fastings, kneelings, and watchings, and the confession of all their past sins; that they may at least do as much as was done in John's baptism [5]." How different was all this toilsome ceremonial from the simplicity of the Apostolic baptism!

[4] De Corona, c. i. &c.

[5] De Baptismo (20).

As the age of superstition advanced, the rite grew still more formal. Baptism, in the second century, had been performed in the open air; on this, too, we have the testimony of Tertullian. "It is all the same, whether one be washed in the sea or in a pond, or a fountain, or a river, or a standing or a running water. Nor is there any difference between those baptized by John in the river Jordan, and those baptized by Peter in the Tiber." But the reign of Constantine, which made Christianity the religion of the throne, gave a sudden impulse to the general pomp of its worship: and portions of the churches, or separate buildings, were appointed expressly for baptizing, and those baptisteries were frequently so large as to allow of several persons being baptized at a time.

In the excessive heats of the Eastern and Southern climates, where constant bathing is almost a necessary of life, baptism by immersion was a habit easily adopted. And yet, even there it was attended with hazards, and was liable to offences of the most repulsive nature. In one of the frequent tumults in Constantinople, in Chrysostom's patriarchate; the soldiery were sent into the Great Church on Easter Eve, while the people were assembled for a general baptism. In the letter of complaint written by Chrysostom, on this occasion, to Innocent, Bishop of Rome, he speaks of intolerable insults to the women, who were already prepared for being baptized, and

were forced to make their escape undressed as they were, many being severely wounded.

The custom of Trine immersion prevailed largely in the East. Thus Chrysostom says, "The Lord hath delivered to us one baptism, by three immersions; or rather by thrice plunging the *head* under water [6]."

When men once invade the simplicity of Scripture, the imagination is let loose, and it always teems with laborious folly. The simple act of devoting the convert or the infant to God became loaded with formalities;—the use of white robes; unguents to anoint the body sometimes before baptism, sometimes after; the tasting of milk and honey; besides the fastings, prayers, and preparatory discipline which have been already mentioned. The Eunomians baptized but one half of the body, from some mystical idea of human corruption.

Immersion long continued the custom of the foreign churches, and was usual in England, even until the reign of Elizabeth. But the custom of sprinkling had begun so early as the ninth century; for, a Council (A. D. 816) orders, "Let the priests know, that when they administer Holy Baptism, they must not pour water on the head of the infant, but they must always dip in the font; as the Son of God gave his own example to all believers, when He

[6] Hom. de Fide.

was *thrice* dipt in the waters of Jordan; so it is necessary by order to be kept and used[7]." In the latter part of this decree, the Council gave a reason, which was no authority; and took for granted, that which it was impossible to know. But such was the manner of the age.

Wickliffe, the noblest name of the 13th century, says, "It is not material whether dipping be used thrice or once, or whether water be poured on the head; but it ought to be according to the custom of the place." Yet, as no command had been given in Scripture for the *formal* Baptism, and as it is of the nature of Christianity to comply with human convenience in all things non-essential, and as the plunging of infants into cold water must often be hazardous to life in our climate, the Common Prayer Book, at the Restoration, contained this order to the Minister.

"If the godfathers do certify him, that the child may well endure it, he is to dip it in the water, discreetly and warily. But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water over it." The difference between this order and the former being simply, that in the latter, the priest was to dip the infant, unless there was an averment *against it;* while, in the former, he was not to dip the infant, unless there was an averment *for it.* Of course, as

[7] Concil. Anglic. t. i.

that averment is never made, the safer and simpler way is now retained.

Baptism by Affusion was adopted in instances, where, in case of sickness, necessary haste, or want of sufficient water for immersion; the only resource was to pour water on the Catechumen. But, though this Baptism was regarded as sufficient for a Christian, it was not regarded as sufficient for a priest, and the baptized person was actually precluded from holding the offices of the Church, except under certain qualifications. Thus, in the remarkable instance of Novatian, who had been elected by an ecclesiastical party to the Bishopric of Rome, it was charged in a letter of complaint by his antagonist Cornelius, that Novatian was incapable of being a Bishop; as incapable, even, of taking Orders. "For all the Clergy, with a great many of the Laity, were against his ordination as presbyter; as it was not lawful for any one baptized *in his bed*, as he had been, to be admitted to any office of the Clergy [8]."

The answer of that eminent leader of the Church, Cyprian, to an enquiry, whether affusion in sickness required another Baptism on recovery, decides the question at once, of the practice, and of its validity, in the opinion of the time.

"You enquire, my dear son, what I think of such as obtain the Grace in time of their sickness, whe-

[8] Euseb. H. E. l. vi.

ther they are to be accounted lawful Christians because they are not washed all over with the water of salvation, but have only some part of it poured on them. . . . . I, according to my humble capacity, judge thus: that the Divine favours are not maimed or weakened, so that less than the whole of them is conveyed, where the benefit of them is received with a full and complete faith, both of the giver and receiver."

"For, the contagion of sin is not washed off in the Sacrament of Salvation, in the same manner as the dust of the skin and the body is washed off in the ordinary and secular bath. It is in another way that the breast of a believer is washed; after another fashion that the mind of a man by faith is cleansed. In the Sacraments of Salvation, when necessity compels, the shortest way of transacting Divine matters, by God's gracious providence, confer the whole benefit."

He then quotes Ezekiel: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean [9]." He then quotes the commands for sprinkling the Levites, and those who had touched the dead [1]; forbids a second Baptism as superfluous, and even as presumptuous; and, referring to the equal measure of the manna given to the Israelites [2], pronounces it an emblem of that impartiality in the Divine mercy, "by which the

[9] xxxvi. 25. [1] Num. viii. xiii. [2] Exod. xvi.

Grace that was to come in after times was to be equally divided among all God's people; without any difference of sex or *years of* age (thus including infants), or respect of persons [3]."

So this manly and intelligent authority settles a question, which, for the time, had excited anxiety, and might have introduced a new schism into an age already fatally prolific of frivolous subtleties, and envenomed distortions of the truth. Instances occurred, and probably, from the troubles of the Church, were then numerous, in which Baptism by affusion was the only one which could be adopted. When exile, dungeons, and scaffolds were the general fate of the more conspicuous teachers; and men were baptized in prison, in flight, or perhaps at the foot of the scaffold, the difficulty of procuring water must often have made immersion impossible.

The histories of the early martyrdoms are known to have been grossly interpolated in the Dark ages; but their chief statements are probably true; so far as their sufferings are retrieved from their Saintship. Christians, in the hands of heathens, tyrants, and robbers, must have been prepared to find but little mercy; and the difficulties of those high-hearted men may have often defied fable. It is recorded that Lawrence, a contemporary of Cyprian, on his way to death, having converted one of the soldiers

[3] Epist. Cyp. 69.

who were to execute him, the soldier brought him a pitcher of water, to baptize him on the spot[4]. Basilides was baptized in prison by some of the brethren; an act which, like the baptism of the Philippian gaoler, was probably done with such simple means of affusion as were at hand; and like the gaoler, he was baptized at the moment, "the same hour of the night, he and all his straightway[5]."

In the twelfth century, Aquinas, the great authority of the age, admits aspersion and affusion, though he prefers immersion, and regards it as the more "lively emblem" of the burial of Christ.

Bonaventura says that affusion was probably used in the Apostolic age, and was in his time used in the Churches of France; but he also prefers immersion as the more usual, the more fitting, and the safer!

Baptism by immersion, in England, is generally now performed in baptisteries, where care is taken, as far as is possible, to avoid offence. But even under the most cautious provisions, the operation is sometimes injurious to health, and may be often offensive to delicacy. The rite by which the Christian is to be made a member of the Church of Christ, and an heir of salvation, cannot be too far removed from levity and contempt. It seems unquestionable, that females undergoing this rite in the presence of a congregation, or even surrounded only by their

[4] Wal. Strab. de Reb. Eccl. c. 26. [5] Hist. Eccles. c. 6.

friends, must often wish that some simpler form, to say the least, should be adopted. At present, the argument chiefly relied on for this hazardous and repulsive practice is a metaphor, "*Buried* by Baptism into His death;" a phrase which *may* merely refer to the fact, that the baptized Christian is entitled to begin a new life of morals and faith, and that his past bondage to the world should no more be suffered to bind him, than the habits of his life may be presumed to pass the grave. But, a metaphor is of all arguments the weakest; and we must look for the practice of immersion in a climate so adverse, and in manners so sensitive, as those of our country, to the passion for extravagance, or the ambition of singularity.

There can be no stronger proof of the prevalence of a custom, than its forcing itself into a language. Baptism had become so frequent, that it had thus penetrated, and apparently been used to express the chief changes of life. We find it thus used by our Lord Himself, to express the commencement of his sufferings[6]: we find it used by St. Paul, to express an event to which it bore so little analogy as martyrdom. "What shall they do who are *baptized* for the dead, if the dead rise not at all[7]?"

I need scarcely more than remind the learned reader of the New Testament, that this text has been

[6] Matt. xx. [7] 1 Cor. xv.

one of the problems of Exegesis for a thousand years; having been discussed in the days of Ambrose; that it formed the perplexity of foreign expositors, among whom were the great names of Scaliger, Erasmus, and Grotius; and that it remains still as undecided as ever. Yet this indecision arises simply from the old habit, the "mala consuetudo" of critics, of preferring the pleasure of attack to the benefit of discovery. The whole ground of Christian antiquity has been actually broken up, to find some explanatory traces of the text, in the writings of the Fathers; Ambrose, Tertullian, Chrysostom, in his diatribes against the Marcianites, the Corinthian customs, and even the superstitions of the more obscure Asiatic sects, each furnishing its quota of confusion. And yet, the meaning might have been obtained at once, by a mere reference to the context. St. Paul had just called his Corinthian converts to a contemplation of the Kingdom of Christ. There were heresies already denying the Resurrection. The Apostle suddenly, and with powerful and natural feeling, exclaims,—If the Kingdom of Glory be false, how deeply must we all have been deceived! How utterly must the lives of our martyrs have been thrown away! How weakly must I have lavished the labours of my struggling and persecuted life. Why do I expose myself to death from day to day?

And this was the language of our Lord. When the wife of Zebedee came to solicit the highest rank in

the future kingdom for her sons, Christ asked them, whether they were prepared to undergo the sufferings through which He must rise to glory. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink, or to be baptized with the baptism that I shall be baptized with," that cup and that baptism being agony and death?

The language of the Apostle is,—"Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? By your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." Then referring to his long struggle at Ephesus; his fight, more like a fight with wild beasts than a controversy with human beings; he speaks of the vastness of this delusion, if the fact were not, that there is a Resurrection; it would have been wise in him and them to escape this overwhelming toil, to avoid this perpetual encounter, to think only of the pleasures of sense, and the world, for the short time of human existence. "Let us eat and drink, *for to-morrow* we die." He then abruptly turns from this fine apostrophe to the grave rebuke of their wavering, and warns them against the insidiousness of heresy. "Be not *deceived*;" evil opinions corrupt pure principles; "evil communications corrupt good manners." Exert your understandings. "*Awake* to righteousness, and sin *not*." You require this rebuke; for some (of you) have not the knowledge of God; "I speak this to *your* shame."

The "Baptism for the dead" was *not* the supposed

substitution of the living for the departed, nor a baptism over the grave, nor a baptism in memory of the departed, nor any one of the crowd of trifling ceremonies which have been offered in explanation, but which evidently involved neither difficulty nor danger; it was death, embraced for the sake of the Gospel. And many had thus died already, and more were about to die. It was the glorious sacrifice of the martyr [8], the willing baptism of the grave.

The names given by the early Church to Baptism are important, as showing not only the high rank in which it was held, but the spiritual point of view in which it was contemplated. Thus it was named Indulgentia, the absolution. Of which Augustine says, "The Sacrament itself may be given by bad men, but the grace can be given only by God." It was also named φωτισμός, the illumination; Salus, the Salvation, from its giving an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. It was also called the Sacramentum, the Mysterium, and the Signaculum,—the Oath, the Mystery, and the Seal, from the contract there made with Christianity. The Seal, in the Apostolic meaning, implied the pledge of the King-

[8] In a later age, the similar expression of "Baptism in blood" for martyrdom was used, and was intelligible. Thus Fulgentius writes: "Firmissime tene, et nullatenus dubites, exceptis illis qui pro nomine Christi *suo sanguine baptizantur*, nullum hominem accepturum vitam æternam, qui non hic a malis suis per penitentiam fidemque fuerit conversus," &c. (De Fide.)

dom. And probably in the double conception that Baptism at once cleared away the guilt of a whole life, and that it was the promise of an immediate advance to future happiness; baptism was in some instances delayed until a late period of life. Thus, in the memorable example of Constantine the Great; the dying Emperor addressed the Bishops surrounding his bed: "Now is the time for me to enjoy the Seal of Immortality, now is the time for me to obtain the Seal of Salvation[9]." It was called the Chrism, as the anointing of one who was to share the honours of a future royalty and priesthood: the "Gift" as the pre-eminent work of mercy: and the "Water of Life."

The lavish eloquence of the Asiatic and African Churches seems to have laboured to give this great instrument of the Divine benevolence due homage. But still, its loftiest and most expressive name was the one given by Scripture, "REGENERATION."

[9] Euseb. de Vita Constantin. l. 4.

CHAPTER VI.

SPONSORS.

The obvious helplessness of infancy renders the care of others necessary during its continuance. Its baptism, its sustenance, and its religion (when it shall be capable of) instruction, are all dependent on the offices of relatives and friends; and in this dependence originated the office of Sponsors.

In the ancient Church there were three classes of sponsorship—for infants; for adults, who were disabled by illness or accident from answering for themselves; and for adults.

One of the errors on this subject, an error which has not been wholly extinguished, is, that sponsors were obliged to maintain the infant in cases of destitution. But in such cases they became the orphans of the Church. It is important to state this claim, because the fear of being burthened still deters many from taking the office of sponsor.

In the early Church, the parents were generally the sponsors; but as instances must occur where the

parents were dead, or distant, or under circumstances which demanded the charities of Christian society, the sponsors might be friends, or strangers, or even individuals prompted by charity alone. As Augustin said of their subsistence, "The whole Church is their mother" —so every Christian ought to feel that the whole Church is their sponsor. The enquiry made of the sponsors at the font was nearly that of our Church Catechism, though with rather a more direct application to the infant. "Does this child believe in God?" "Does he turn to God?" which of course implied turning from Satan. The sponsors then proceeded to answer for it, that they "renounced the devil, his pomps and his works." But this representation for the infant produced questions on the actual effect of the sponsorship. Thus Boniface demanded of Augustin, how such a substitution could be valid? "How can it be said that a child has believed, or renounced the devil, who has no thought of those things? If any one should ask me whether a child will be virtuous or a thief when he shall be a man? we should doubtless answer, we know not; or, if we were asked whether a child in his infancy thought good or evil? the answer must be the same; we know not. Since then no one would answer either for his future morals or his present thoughts, how is it that parents, when, as sponsors, they bring their children to baptism, can say, the children do those things that their age does not think of?"

Augustin replies, with a subtlety which is very far from strength, "The child is called a believer, because he receives the Sacrament of faith. Christ was but once offered in Himself, and yet He is offered not only in the annual solemnity of the Passover, but every day for the people, and no one speaks falsely who says that he is offered as the Sacrament of Christ's body is, after a certain manner, called his body, and the Sacrament of his blood is called his blood, so the Sacrament of faith *is faith*." The determination to be content with a bad reason, rather than want one, has been the bane of theological argument; and Augustin's logic has palpably broken down under him. It is equally evident that his error is founded on a misconception of the nature of Baptism.

A second duty of the sponsors, on which he strenuously insists, and with better reason, is the spiritual education of the children. This, however, must have its limits. The parents are the spiritual guardians given by nature, the sponsors are only the spiritual guardians given by choice. Yet, where circumstances deprive the children of the superior source of education, or when the parents render themselves unfit for its exercise, or in the various instances which human casualty is constantly bringing before the eye of Christian benevolence; the care of the young and helpless mind, if not an obligation, might be an impulse of honour and virtue. In a world of trial we

cannot have too many ties of friendship and protection. Relationship must take the first place, but a more natural and affecting substitute for its loss could scarcely be found than a voluntary relationship of the soul, a kindred pledged in the presence of the Almighty; a spiritual bond formed on motives superior to all the mere obligations of earth, and forming a species of parentage for eternity.

Augustin enters into large detail on those duties, and enumerates the classes of virtues which the sponsors may be peculiarly expected to enforce—personal purity, the restraint of the tongue from evil-speaking, the avoidance of light language, the study of Scripture, and attendance on public worship. Some of his restrictions, however, go beyond those rational and Christian bounds, and give a singular conception of the spiritual alarms of his day. The sponsors were to caution their young pupils against the practice of divination and soothsaying, and against hanging phylacteries or diabolical characters on their own bodies or those of their relations [2].

A second order of sponsors were those who answered for persons who had suddenly been struck speechless, or been seized with frenzy by the violence of disease; for such might be baptized, if any of their friends would testify that they had previously desired baptism. This provision was pro-

[2] Aug. Serm. de Temp. 163.

bably often found important, in the sudden and violent diseases of the East and South, and especially in the epidemics which have so frequently visited Western Asia and Africa. It would appear that it was not unusual on such occasions, to appoint persons publicly for the purpose; the baptized being informed, on their recovery, of the vows which had been thus pronounced by their sureties.

The third class of sponsorship applied to the adult; for though the sponsors in this instance were not in general called on to answer for the catechumen, yet instances occurred where the persons brought to the font were too destitute of all knowledge to comprehend the rudiments of Christianity; in this case, the sponsors answered for them as children. It was even a part of the office of the deaconess to instruct the women. In consequence, they gradually became the principal sponsors for females.

The appointments and exemptions of sponsorship sometimes exhibit the solemn trifling into which men degrade valuable institutions, when the rage of ceremonial invades them. At one period nuns were considered as fit sponsors; at others, monks were prohibited, and are still so prohibited by Rome. The Council of Mentz forbid fathers to bring their children to the font as godfathers. Presbyters and deacons in the Romish Church are forbidden to be godfathers. By a still more ancient rule, energumens, heretics, and penitents, were forbidden; persons excommuni-

cated, or unbaptized, or known criminals; or, by some Canons, persons unconfirmed; were forbidden. The whole subject evidently formed a curious and complicated legislation. But some of these prohibitions are of a more practical and of a more injurious order. By the existing laws of Rome, sponsorship is supposed to establish a kind of relationship, too intimate to allow of marriage between the sponsors. This difficulty, however, impeded only the lower orders. The rich could marry by dispensation, and the difficulty, as usual, was turned into the funds of Rome.

By the ancient rule, but one sponsor was required—a man for a male, a woman for a female. In the case of infants a woman might be sponsor for a boy, a man for a girl. In later times, to have more than one sponsor was forbidden: the Council of Mentz assigning as the reason, "That as there is but one God, one faith, and one baptism, an infant ought to have but one sponsor."

The English Reformation exhibited its good sense in sweeping away all those grave frivolities; and we have the rule of Baptism established in three offices—public baptism for infants in the Church; private baptism for infants in houses; and baptism for such as are of riper years, and are able to answer for themselves.

By the Rubrick, the curates of every parish are enjoined to admonish the people that they defer not

the baptism of their children longer than the *first or second* Sunday after their birth.

The people are to be admonished, that it is most convenient that baptism shall *not* be administered but on the Sundays (and other holidays), when the greatest number of people come together.

There shall be for every male child two godfathers and one godmother; and for every female child, two godmothers and one godfather. Parents are not to stand in this relation.

Names of palpable offence to propriety shall not be permitted in baptism.

Attempts of this kind have probably seldom occurred in our more decorous time; but occasions may have arisen where strong party feeling, or feverish politics, betrayed parents into this indecorum. In such a case, the first duty of the officiating minister would be to remonstrate; and, if reasoning failed, his next would be to refuse. No authority could compel him; no court could receive such a charge; and there can be no question that he would be supported by the feeling of the whole Christian community. A Sacrament must not be made a scandal.

PRIVATE BAPTISM.

By the Rubrick, the curates of every parish shall admonish the people against baptism in houses, except in case of direct necessity.

But, by the 69th Canon, the minister, on receiving sufficient evidence of the danger of the infant, must attend at the house, either by himself or his curate, and baptize the infant, under a penalty.

The Rubrick directs that the baptism shall be by *pouring* water on the infant. And that this is a sufficient baptism, and that it is not to be repeated; but the infant, if it survive, is to be brought into the Church, that the congregation may be certified of its baptism.

LAY BAPTISM.

This is a matter of more dubiousness, and has been the source of much discussion, and of various change. In the early ages of the Church, the necessity of baptism was so strongly felt, that its loss was regarded, and justly, as one of the deepest calamities. To avoid this misfortune, baptism seems to have been administered, in the absence of the priest, by any hands, those of the new convert, or even an unbeliever, or even of persons of stained character. As has been already observed in these pages, the superstition also grew, of conceiving that it was a panacea for all sin, and an immediate passport to heaven. On this ground the Emperor Constantine deferred his baptism till his last hour. "Because, as any one might baptize, and water was always accessible, the Sacrament was always within reach of the dying."

By the Canon, Baptism was the regular office of

the priest; but where necessity occurred, laymen and women might baptize.

The Church of Rome held that Baptism with water, and the invocation of the Holy Trinity, might be administered by any one.

The validity of Lay Baptism has been chiefly brought into question in England, on baptism by Sectarians. Bnt it is now held, on the authority of the Ecclesiastical Court, that a child baptized by a Dissenter with water, and the invocation of the Holy Trinity, is baptized in the sense of the Rubric and of the 68th Canon. The Canon being promulgated in 1603, and before there were Dissenters, its application must have been to baptism performed, in emergency, by lay hands.

Another question arose (in 1806) whether a minister was bound to baptize a Dissenter's child, with the knowledge that he was to be brought up a Dissenter. To this the opinion of Counsel was, that, by the 68th Canon, the clergyman was bound under a penalty to baptize *any child* which, after due notice, was brought to him.

Adult Baptism is seldom administered in England by the Clergy of the Established Church. But, as occasions may occur, in which persons have been left unbaptized, or have been kept back from baptism by their parents, a " form of Baptism" has been prepared for their reception. In the colonies, the conversion of Negroes brings this form into use.

Some difficulty arose from the idea, that baptism entitled the slave to manumission. But this question was decided in the negative by a formal judgment of English law. Fortunately, such difficulties can arise no more in the great Protestant empire, which never showed itself more worthy of the name, and never set a nobler example to nations, than in abjuring for ever all part in that most cruel, sanguinary, and Satanic addition to the general sufferings of human nature, the hideous traffic in our fellow man.

The chief references in this chapter are taken from Bingham's "Origines Ecclesiasticæ," and the "Ecclesiastical Law," edited by Phillimore.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARTICLES.

The Articles of the Church having been lately used as a refuge from the meaning of its Services, it is of importance to show their true intention.

The body of doctrine, named the Thirty-nine Articles, was chiefly formed on a series of Articles given to the Church in the reign of Edward VI. After being passed in Convocation, and confirmed by royal authority, in 1562, they were again confirmed in 1571, being "Allowed to be holden and executed within the realm by the assent and consent of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth," &c.; and again confirmed by the subscriptions of the hands of the Archbishops, Bishops, and whole body of both houses of Convocation, &c.

They were again ratified by James I., with a long and strong preamble, still retained, stating the object of their publication to be the quieting of disputes. "Therefore, in those both curious and unhappy differences, which have for so many hundred years, in differ-

ent times and places, exercised the Church of Christ, we will, that all further curious search be laid aside, and those disputes shut up in God's promises, as they be generally set forth to us in the Holy Scriptures, and the general meaning of the Articles of the Church of England according to them; and that no man hereafter shall either print or preach to draw the Article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof, and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense." Then follow threats of penalties against all readers in universities, heads of colleges, and divines in universities, who shall impeach the meaning already established by Convocation.

This preamble shows the especial purpose of the Articles, and shows that they were published less to decide doctrine, a matter nearly hopeless among men, than to close controversy. This disposes completely of the pretence that they are "precise and dogmatical;" their object being, declaredly, general and quieting. But it will be seen, on further enquiry, that to the heresy which denies infant Regeneration they afford *no* refuge, except on the condition of distorting their purpose and perverting their language.

The Ninth Article. "Of Original, or Birth Sin."

"Original sin standeth not in the following of

Adam, (as the Pelagians [1] do vainly talk ;) but it is the fault and corruption of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil. . . . . And this infection of nature doth remain; yea, in them that are regenerated (renatis). . . . . And though there is no condemnation for them that believe, and are *baptized* (renatis), yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence hath in itself the nature of sin" (in the repetition of the word *renatis*, baptized is used for "regenerate," a sufficient evidence that the translators regarded them as the same).

The Fifteenth Article asserts the sinless nature of Christ, and adds, that "All we the rest, though *baptized* and *born again* in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

The immediate connexion of regeneration with baptism is here affirmed again; and, perhaps, the more effectively from its not being a direct object of the Article. The connexion is implied in the common language of all the Baptismal Articles.

The Twenty-fifth Article is "Of the Sacraments."

"Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges

[1] The Pelagians declared, that the sin of Adam was personal, and did not descend ; that man still retained his original liberty ; and that Adam was made mortal, and would have died whether he sinned or not.

or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him. There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord." The Article then rejects the five Romish Sacraments, as not having any "visible sign or ceremony ordained of God."

The whole thus concludes. "The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed on, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation. But they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith."

This Article defines a Sacrament, distinguishing it from all other acts of worship. The name was first given by Pliny, in describing the pledges given to religion by the Asiatic Christians; as, in his conception, resembling in their force and fidelity the oaths of the Roman soldiery to their standards.

A Sacrament is an institution of Christ, in which some material thing is sanctified by the use of some form of words, being a covenant between God and man; by which man acts on one side, and God on the other—man by prayer and practice, God by the secret but sure agencies of his spiritual power.

Ritual may be appointed by the Church, but a Sacrament, being the means of conveying divine grace, can be appointed only by Him who is the sole giver of grace.

To distinguish a Sacrament from a vow, a prayer, or any species of worship, it is important to remember, that a Sacrament must have matter for its direct object. Worship is mental, declared by words, or actions of the exterior; Sacraments exhibit a material sign, accompanied and partly explained by acts, words, and gestures; and with the matter (as water, or the bread and wine), there must be a form of words to indicate its purpose, that purpose being twofold—the one a federal action to unite us to Christ, and thus derive a benefit from Him; and the other to unite us by this public profession and joint partaking with his body, the Church. Thus Baptism has all the essentials of a Sacrament. Water for its matter: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" for its form: "Go preach and baptize;" for its institution. "The answer of a good conscience;" for its federal rite "Baptism saves us;" for its blessing, the Sacrament uniting us to Christ; "There is One Baptism, as there is one body and one Spirit—we are all baptized into one body [2]."

But, the final paragraph of the Article, "In such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation," is now adopted as one of

[2] Burnet, 25 Art.

the refuges of those who deny infant regeneration, and who will not admit it without the qualifying fiction of "prevenient grace."

But, in the first place, the framers of the Article in those words evidently had in view not Baptism, but the Lord's Supper; which alone could be gazed on, as in the Romish Elevation of the Host, or carried about in procession, as constantly occurs in Popish countries. St. Paul's reference is to the Lord's Supper.

In the next, this paragraph is simply the substitute for one of King Edward's Articles, which denied the efficacy of Sacraments, "*ex opere* operato," or as a mere charm. (For, Popery often administered them to persons in a dying and insensible state, or to others totally regardless of spiritual reform.)

The Article was thus meant, as a guard against Popish practices; its general object being, to limit the Sacraments to two, in denial of the Popish doctrine of *five* additional. Finally, the word "worthily," puts the case of infants wholly out of view. To receive a Sacrament either worthily or unworthily, or to do any thing either worthily or unworthily, by the very terms excludes infancy; for it implies moral volition, of which no infant has a vestige; we might as well speak of the worthiness or unworthiness of a stone.

The Twenty-seventh Article treats expressly of Baptism.

"Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and

mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church.

"The promises of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace is increased by virtue of prayer, to God.

"The Baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

The two former paragraphs of this article apply to Adult Baptism alone, for the obvious reasons, that there is a third paragraph distinctly applying to Infant Baptism; and also, that the worth and qualifications demanded in the two former are of an order which cannot exist in infancy. "Faith is confirmed and grace is increased," is a sentence which can have no conceivable reference to a condition of our nature wholly insensible to faith, and equally remote from grace, being still under original sin. And this argument derives additional evidence from the expression, "they that receive Baptism *rightly*;" which removes it from the case of infancy at once. Right and wrong in spiritual things are words applicable only to moral choice. An infant is wholly incapable of choice. Years, bringing the use of its understanding, will give it that capacity: but until then, its acts can have no

more respect to a moral sense, or lie more under a moral responsibility, than the movements of a machine. Our ancestors in the faith knew this as well as we; they were at least as wise as their successors; and we must not charge their common sense with asserting palpable absurdities in the most solemn acts on which human judgment could be employed. Thus those Articles, to which Heresy flies from the unquestionable clearness of the Church Services, and in whose pretended dubiousness of expression others "take their stand," offers it no shelter whatever. Their language is as clear as that of the Services, when it is applied to the evident object of those documents; and becomes ambiguous, as all other language would become, only when it is applied to purposes for which it was never intended.

Nor are we inclined to agree with those, who take the half measure of supposing that the validity of Infant Baptism is grounded on the fact, that the infant interposes no obstacle. A *negative* qualification is a contradiction in terms. The true right of the Christian infant is, like the ancient right of the Jewish infant, that he is born of parents already dedicated to God; that God has already laid on those parents a duty, to bring their children to his Service, as they themselves were brought; that He has declared a new birth to be the instrument of entering into the future Kingdom of Heaven; that He has appointed a Baptism by water and the Holy Ghost as the direct and actual means

of that new birth; and that He has appointed this Baptism without any restriction of sex or age, circumstance or form. He, in his Omnipotence and Wisdom, has made no stipulation whatever. Of the Christian infant He has asked nothing, any more than of the Jewish infant of old; because He asks nothing which cannot be given, and the infant has nothing to give. Of the adult He asks nothing, but to be sincere. What could be simpler than the Apostolic Baptism? On the day of Pentecost the only cry of the multitude was, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The only answer of Peter was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." The Apostle did not adjourn the assemblage to other times or teaching, or wait for forms of consecration, or interpose any delay whatever: he declared that "the promise was to them and to their children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord shall call." "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the *same day* were added unto them about three thousand souls!"

The Baptism of the Ethiopian is a matter of equal simplicity. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture (Isaiah), and preached unto him Jesus." "And he baptized him." The gaoler of Philippi only cries out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and is answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy

house." "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." On that night he was baptized, and all his family.

In those important narratives there does not appear to be any pledge whatever demanded, or any direct promise given, or any line of conduct dictated. All those are left to the suggestion of the understanding; "Believest thou that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ?" constitutes the whole confession. When that is sincere, the other observances of holiness follow, from the natural understanding, aided by the Holy Spirit. The whole artificial system of modern conversion, the previous struggles, the prescriptive exercises, and the elaborate despair, which make so large a figure in historic saintship, are wholly unknown: the "prevenient grace," which is so constantly called on to meet the presumed difficulties of Infant Baptism, is no where heard of; we owe its existence solely to modern dexterity. In the Apostolic narrative, the Gospel is simply preached, the mind comprehends, the heart feels, and the man is baptized.

As to the modern question—whether the man who came to the font in mockery or negligence may not still be benefited by Baptism at some later times, the doubt is easily solved on the principles of common conduct. Baptism for the adult is only for the convert; but the mocker or the negligent is *not* a convert. If there be any result, it must be only to punish the audacity which could offer this disrespect

to a gift of God. The Eucharist, instead of a blessing, was changed into a punishment to the Corinthians, who had degraded its sanctity. Baptism holds an equal dignity, and, doubtless, would be equally avenged.

The direct knowledge of the doctrine of the Established Church is naturally to be sought in her Offices. It is in those, that she speaks to the people, who form the great body of the Church; it is in those that, all consideration of controversy being excluded, she speaks with practical decision; and it is in those that she draws, for the substantial use of the people, her solemn and full conclusions from the language of Christ and his Apostles. By the plain meaning of those Offices she is bound, and requires her Clergy to be bound. For her sincerity in their language she is accountable to the people whom she teaches, as for their truth she stands to answer before God. Those who shrink from their meaning deceive, or are themselves deceived.

The doctrine of infant regeneration in Baptism is impressed on all those Services, in every shape, of direct words and of implied intention, of practical precept, and of spiritual operation; the impress being more especially made in the Offices for Baptism. The first exhortation in the "Public Baptism of Infants," declares that all men are born in sin; and since "Our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the Kingdom of God except he be *regenerate*, by water and the Holy Ghost;" the persons present

are called on to pray, that God, of his mercy, will grant to the child "that which *by nature* he cannot have; that he may by Baptism be received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively (an actual) member of the same."

The prayer which follows on the part of the people, repeats the solicitation for the New Birth still more emphatically, if possible. It implores God, that he will "wash and sanctify the child with the Holy Ghost," and enumerates as the results, his being delivered from the Divine wrath (against original sin); and his being received into the ark of Christ's Church; that in faith, hope, and charity, he may pass through the world to the land of everlasting life, to reign with God through Christ, world without end.

In the prayer which follows, God is called on by all the glories of redemption, as the Helper of all that fly to Him, the Life of them that believe, and the Resurrection from the dead! to grant that the infant coming to his holy Baptism may receive remission of his sin, by spiritual regeneration; and . . . . that he may come to the eternal kingdom promised through Christ."

After reading the portion of St. Mark's Gospel [3], which describes the blessing of the children by our Lord,—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God," the Exhortation says, "Doubt ye not, there-

[3] Mark x. 13.

fore, but earnestly believe, that He will likewise favourably receive this present infant: that He will give him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom."

It has been already remarked, that those earnest supplications for the Divine mercy to the infant, neither imply any doubt that the mercy will be granted, nor that the Baptism will be complete in both its parts, the water and the Holy Ghost. In bringing the child to the font we are performing a command of God, and doing an act of the highest good to the infant. Prayer is *not* doubt. We are commanded "to pray without ceasing," to acknowledge every benefit of our lives to be the act of his mercy, and to feel that for all we are to be grateful to the Almighty Giver. Prayer is the natural language of the heart to God; and we use it best, when we use it in that perfect confidence, which is the holiest form of hope, and in that perfect love "which casteth out fear."

On the performance of the Baptism, the declaration is made by the officiating minister, "that the child is *received into the congregation of Christ's flock.*" This is followed by the declaration that "the child *is regenerate*, and *grafted* into the body of Christ's Church." Those present are then called on to give thanks, for that "it hath pleased God to *regenerate* the infant with his Holy Spirit, to receive him for his own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into his holy Church."

In private Baptism, which is generally presumed to be in emergency or sickness, sponsors are not required; which shows that, however advantageous in general cases, they are not deemed by the Church to be essential. The former thanksgiving after Baptism is repeated. "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit."

The child is publicly received on some subsequent day into the Church in this manner, by the minister: "I certify you, that in this case all is well done, and according unto due order, concerning the baptizing of this child, who being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now, by the *laver* of *regeneration in baptism*, received into the number of the children of God and heirs of everlasting life."

The remainder of the private Baptism is a repetition of the public, with the thanksgiving,—"that it hath pleased God to *regenerate* the infant with his Holy Spirit, and to receive it for his own child by adoption, and to incorporate it into his holy Church."

If the child should not have been baptized with water, and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the minister is to baptize it according to the form of public baptism. The "Baptism of such as are of riper years" consists of the same prayers and form, except that the catechumens, instead of being

answered for by sponsors, in general answer for themselves.

This baptism is seldom required, except in new settlements, or in the colonies.

In the Catechism, the doctrine is the same in its nature and in its explicitness. "What is the outward visible sign in baptism?

"Water, wherein the person is baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

"What is the inward and spiritual grace?

"A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace."

In the "Order of Confirmation" the bishop demands of the persons to be confirmed—"Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons?"

After the sentences, the bishop summons all to prayer. "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to *regenerate* these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins. Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter." Thus, in this series of Services, there is no

difference of principle. All express the same doctrine, use the same language, and appeal in the same sense to the declarations of Scripture.

It is not my purpose to detail the history of those Services. In the English Ritual the office of Baptism may be regarded as divided into three parts—the introduction, the preparatory office, and the action of the Sacrament, with the conclusion. The introduction originated in the forms of admitting and instructing the catechumens; among whom, by a singular extension of the rite, infants were numbered. We find in the manuals of York and Salisbury, the "Ordo ad Catechumenum faciendum," containing the signing of the cross, the imposition of hands, benediction, the sacrament of salt, and the introduction of the infant by the hand of the minister, as a catechumen. Those rites, with the exorcism, were abolished by the English ritual; but the prayers being retained, the introduction continues partially the ancient office of the catechumen.

The address of the minister to the people to pray for the infant, has a resemblance to the liturgies of Gaul. The renunciations and professions are those of the Constantinopolitan and Antiochian patriarchates. This once constituted a very formal portion of the ceremonial. In the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem, speaking to those who had been recently baptized, said, "First, you have entered into the vestibule of the baptistery, and, standing towards

the West, you have heard, and been commanded, to stretch forth your hands, and renounce Satan, as if he were present [3]."

Those customs are still retained in the patriarchate of Constantinople. The Monophysites of Antioch and Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Armenia, also pursue the same grave formality—turning their faces to the *West*. Why, is not explained; unless, perhaps, in contrast to the East, as the birth-place of our Lord.

Then followed the profession and the benediction of the water. In all the ancient churches the baptism was administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; though in some, additional words were used. In the Sarum Manual, the order was, that the godfathers and godmothers should receive the infant from the hands of the priest after baptism. The same was in the "Ordo Romanus."

The sign of the cross on the infant's forehead has been an old source of controversy; but it appears to have been a still older practice. It was frequent in all the actions of the Christian, and from this habit was naturally transferred to baptism. The "Ordo Romanus," published from MSS. of the tenth century, appoints the sign to be made "immediately after" the Baptism, and the same rite is adopted in the manuals of Sarum and York. It was derived from the Sacramentary of Gregory.

[3] Cyril. Catech. Myst.

Where forms have a mystical meaning attached to them, they almost inevitably degenerate into superstition, because the obscurity of the meaning gives a latitude for fiction; but the signing of the cross affects no mystery, and is simply our acknowledgment of a crucified Redeemer. We must not suffer the Papist to engross this noblest of all memorials.

In Gaul, Spain, and Milan, the priest washed the feet of the baptized; and milk and honey were given to be tasted, and white robes were put upon them. Confirmation sometimes followed, and in the Eastern Churches follows at this day.

The office was followed by an exhortation to the sponsors, a custom which was adopted in the offices of York and Salisbury [4].

[4] Those statements on the Services have been condensed from Bingham, and Palmer—Origines Liturgicæ.

CHAPTER VIII.

CALVINISTIC BAPTISM.

Calvin's natural talents, his indefatigable activity, his unshaken determination, and his inexhaustible perseverance, necessarily gave great weight to his opinions, in an age when the value of opinion was measured by its audacity. From the death of Luther, he was the most renowned theologian of Europe; when that great light went down, he filled the hemisphere, if with a more erratic light, with scarcely inferior splendour.

But his principle was unsound; it was virtually, that the human intellect is sufficient for all things: he thus rushed into discussions never intended for the comprehension of man, was bewildered at his first step, and has left to posterity, as the work of a wasted life, a larger legacy of error, than perhaps was ever before bequeathed by human presumption.

But this could not last; the practical opposition between Calvinism and Scripture soon became palpable: the utter incapacity of the human intellect to combine

the great half-developed truths of Providence into a system of inevitable decrees and inscrutable severities, rapidly revolted alike the common sense and the common feeling of mankind; and finally reduced Calvinism to what it now is,—a stagnant section of a "minute philosophy."

Calvin was an innovator, by the constitution of his mind; his original impulse was overthrow; and in his doctrine of Baptism, he employed himself in breaking down the system, which the Church had been building up for fifteen hundred years.

His propositions were:—

Baptism is *not* an instrument of Grace, but merely a sign or evidence of Regeneration.

Regeneration, when it exists at all, exists previously to Baptism.

Infant Baptism does *not* convey the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The Elect alone are regenerate. They are regenerate without Baptism. Election and Regeneration irresistibly confer salvation.

The infants of the Elect are *not* received into covenant, on account of the previous Baptism; but are received into Baptism on account of the previous covenant.

The statement of Zuinglius is of the same order: with him, the Sacrament conveys no Grace. "The benefits of Sacraments are, that they are appointed by Christ; that they give witness to his history;

that they bring before the mind, through the senses, the things signified; that they are qualified to show the things which they signify; and that they are helpers to our faith in seeing heavenly things, and are pledges to the brotherhood of the Church[1]."

Bullinger merely tells us that "Sacraments are holy things, given to be testimonies and seals of the preached Gospel; and by visible objects to set before us God's mysteries."

Thus, all that the Church declares to form the *especial* purpose of a Sacrament,—the spiritual power, the communion with the Giver of all grace, the covenant performed in both its parts, by the mercy of God meeting and cherishing the obedience of man; have no place in the Calvinistic plan.

A tract on Regeneration, by an intelligent and sincere writer[2], has lately revived an old theory of Baptism, as follows:—"The great mystery of our salvation is, that we become members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones. As the fallen nature of the 'old man' is incapable of attaining to such perfection, a new birth is necessary, whereby the new man may be created, and we may become members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

"Our regeneration is consequently to be con-

[1] Fid. Chris. p.

[2] "Reflections on Regeneration," by Lord Redesdale.—(Rivingtons.)

sidered in union with Christ's incarnation. And as He, when He took our nature upon Him, was born of the Spirit and the Virgin, so we, when we put his flesh upon us, are born of the Spirit and of the water. Thus, St. Paul says, 'as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,' and 'by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body;' and 'Ye are the body of Christ.' The water, in our regeneration, supplies the place of the virgin in his incarnation: the Holy Spirit, acting on both, produces Christ's body. His death also came through the virgin, by whom he was made man."

"So, likewise, we are baptized into his mortality; and the Spirit, of which with the virgin he was born, and which raised Him on the third day, assists us with the water in our regeneration, and will raise us also. This interpretation is the only one which explains clearly the words of St. Paul, "Buried with him in Baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him."

All opinions respectfully offered should be received with respect. But probably we cannot go further in explaining the use of water in a spiritual operation, than that its use, as an emblem, indicates a birth. Thus, as the new-born infant is washed before it is clothed, so the first act of the spiritual birth implies a purification. But an analogy is not an explanation; and the whole of the Divine action on the

heart of man is equally beyond the reach of human explanation. Grace, justification, the vicarious atonement, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, his assistance in our prayers, all his operations, are palpably placed beyond that boundary which marks the utmost range of the human intellect. Those must be the discoveries of a future age of spiritual illumination, or perhaps of a future existence.

It will equally be acknowledged, that the whole body of the Reformers equally fail, when they attempt to offer an *explanation* of this Sacrament. It would only fatigue the reader to give a list of the conflicting opinions, the perplexed conjectures, and the obscure conclusions, into which the most distinguished names of the Reformation had betrayed themselves, from Melancthon downwards; until they found that "the foolishness of Scripture was wiser than the wisdom of man," and gladly returned to rest in the simple reception of the truth, and in the faithful submission to the words of the Almighty.

The temptations which thus misled so many men of unquestioned intelligence, and of equally unquestioned sincerity, originated in suffering external things and local opinions to interpose between their reason and the Scriptures. Their just abhorrence of the Romish superstition, which attached an actual efficacy to the Sacraments, however received, rendered them jealous of their actual efficacy. We thus have Beza connecting Regeneration with the

mere Romish act, and declaring that the fruit of Baptism existed only in the moment when faith began; which sometimes went before, and sometimes followed Baptism [3]. He even thinks that the infants of Christians are born in Christ—of course regenerate *before* Baptism.

Another source of error was the supposition, that faith alone is essential; a theory on which infant Baptism became almost wholly superfluous, on the ground that no one had a right to salvation unless he had given evidence of having faith; which no infant can give.

Another source of error was the Calvinistic doctrine of indefectible grace. The idea, that the Christian once regenerate *must* continue in the Divine favour, and be unfailingly entitled to future glory; contrasted with the sufficient daily proofs that the baptized may degrade their Christian profession, made them disunite Regeneration from Baptism [4]. Hooker observes, on this capital error, "Predestination bringeth not life without vocation, wherein our Baptism is implied. For, as we are not naturally men, without birth, so neither are we Christian men, in the eye of the Church of God, but by new birth; nor, according

[3] Apage hunc errorem operis operati, &c.

[4] "Fieri non potest, ut qui Spiritûs Sancti ope ita Christo unitus fuerit, ut unus cum illo Spiritus evaserit, in Christum credere suo tempore vel negligat, vel deinceps etiam desinat."—Gataker, p. 150.

to the manifest course of divine dispensation, new born, but by Baptism, which both declareth and maketh us Christians." He then defines Baptism as "the door of our actual entrance into God's house; the first apparent beginning of life; a seal, perhaps, to the grace of election before received; but to our sanctification here a step that hath not any *before it*[5]."

This opinion would have been more valuable, because more scriptural, if Hooker had omitted the reference to Election; of all mysteries the most mysterious, and of which man knows nothing, and *can* know nothing.

I shall not go further into this recital of honest error. In every instance, where theologians have attempted to reduce the Sacraments to a human system; to force them into coincidence with the common operations of life; or to interpret them by principles adopted from their own idiosyncracies, the attempt has totally failed. They are divine instruments, appointed for divine purposes, and in all senses, above the manipulation of man. Our only wisdom can be shown, in taking them as they are given; in adopting them with that fulness of acceptance and sincerity of faith, which is the highest act of wisdom; in conforming our conduct to the vows which they imply; and in resting our souls in the sacred conviction, that

[5] Eccl. P. b. v.

they are the ordinances of God, and that "though heaven and earth pass away, his words shall not pass away."

In ample contrast and confutation, we may place against those tamperings with the truth, the authority of the most eminent theologian of his age, a writer exhibiting the depth of Hooker, without his cloudy prolixity, and the learning of Warburton without his inveterate paradox; the celebrated Waterland [6].

Taking for his subject the great text, "But, after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by *works* of righteousness which we have done, but according to his *mercy*; He saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour [7]." He proceeds to distinguish and define the two great ope-

[6] Waterland was the champion of the Church in his day. His learning and vigour of understanding attracted early notice, and, after obtaining a fellowship, he became master of his college (Magdalen), at Cambridge. He held also the Chancellorship of York and the Archdeaconry of Middlesex. Though he never obtained the highest rank of the Church, his life was spent in showing himself worthy of all distinction by his defence of its principles. His works, still retaining all their force and freshness, have survived the whole languid and verbose divinity of the earlier half of the eighteenth century. His defence of the Trinitarian doctrine still stands beside the immortal "Analogy" of Butler. (He died in 1740.)

[7] Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6.

rations of the Holy Spirit, Regeneration and Renewal. I give but an outline of his argument.

"St. Paul has here taught us 'God's method of saving both Jew and Gentile,' under the Christian dispensation.

"It is done of free grace, and according to his pure *mercy*, *not* for any act of our unassisted ability; but by the washing of regeneration, the Sacrament of Christian Baptism, considered in both its parts, the outward sign water, and the inward sign a new birth unto righteousness, wrought by the Holy Spirit [8].

"But, while Christ speaks of Regeneration alone, St. Paul speaks also of the Renewing.

"Regeneration means a *spiritual change* wrought in man by the Holy Spirit, in the use of Baptism; whereby he is translated from his natural state in Adam to a spiritual state in Christ.

"Regeneration, on the part of the Almighty, means admission into Sonship; on the part of man it means his entrance into that Sonship. God makes the grant, and it is *entirely* his act; man receives only, and is acted upon; though sometimes *active*, in qualifying himself, as in the case of *adults;* and sometimes *passive*, as in the case of *infants*. This change carries with it many advantages, but all reducible

[8] "Aqua exhibens forinsecus Sacramentum gratiæ, Spiritus operans intrinsecus beneficium gratiæ, solvens vinculum culpæ, regenerans hominem in uno Christo, ex uno Adamo generatum."—August. Ep. ad Bonif. xcviii.

to two—remission of sins, and eternal happiness. Those blessings may all be forfeited, if the man revolts from God, and such a man is *no longer* in a regenerate state; but still the original grant remains and the Sonship [9] is still in force, if the revolter shall return. If he thus return, he will not require to be regenerated again; but he will require to be *renewed*.

"Regeneration stands complete in two things: the grant made to the individual, and the reception of the grant. The former remains always the same; but the reception may vary according to the condition of the recipient."

This doctrine evidently does not doubt that the whole benefit of Regeneration may be rendered ineffectual by human perverseness. It merely asserts, that God is always willing to restore the repentant sinner to that sonship which is essential to his entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven; and that the gift of Regeneration demands no *repetition*.

The next great work of the Spirit is Renovation. It evidently differs from regeneration; for the latter may be received by infants; who certainly can have no sense of the former. The regeneration is a single act, which is never repeated: the renewal is an act which may be constantly repeated, and for which we

[9] "As many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the *Sons* of God."—John i. 12. Rom. viii. 14.

are to exercise continual supplication. Thus we find that, though the Christian is constantly called on for renewal, he is *never* called on for regeneration. "Be ye renewed by the renewing of your mind."—The inward man is renewed day by day." The restoration of the fallen Christian is by "*renewing* him again unto repentance." This renovation, in its reality, its efficacy, and its necessity, is expressed by the strongest images of spiritual change and substantial vigour:—"Putting on the new man;" or a total abandonment of the past, and a total adoption of the reformed nature. "Having on the breastplate of righteousness," or being newly equipped for the conflict with the powers of darkness. "Putting on the armour of light," or shining in the lustrous and impenetrable defence furnished by Divine truth: "Putting on Christ," the loftiest and most sacred of all conceptions—adopting the holiness, the zeal, and the charity of the Saviour.

Waterland, like some of our great divines of the preceding century, occasionally ventures to speculate on those movements of the Spirit by which adults are brought to Baptism. Thus, Bull. (Apol.) "In Scripturis dicitur Spiritus divinus, ante conversiones hominis, quasi ad cordis ostium pulsare; post conversiones vero interiora domus intrare." But, on subjects like those, as all our knowledge must be by revelation,—where nothing is revealed, silence is wisdom.

The distinction between the new birth and the renewal was strongly marked by the leading German Reformers; and is held with equal strength by our Church, in the offices of Baptism, in the Catechism, and in her public prayers. In one of the Collects [1] we expressly pray, "that we, being regenerate and made the children of God by adoption and grace, may daily be *renewed* by his Holy Spirit [2]."

Regeneration and renovation differ in three things: First, with respect to their effective causes;—the former being the work of the Spirit in the use of water; the latter being the work of the Spirit and the man together. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; *for* it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure [3]."

2nd. They differ with respect to repetition;—the former being given once only; the latter being constantly capable of recurrence.

3rd. They differ in their nature.—The former, as an act of God, being given once for all, in Baptism; the latter being capable of total extinction.

In this language respecting the inextinguishable nature of regeneration, Waterland evidently means

[1] For Christmas Day.

[2] "There is a mighty difference between regeneration and renovation. We can be *born* but once, because we can live but once; but we can recover often, because we can sink often." (Dean Stanhope, Boyle Lecture.)

[3] Phil. ii. 12, 13.

no more than that God is always ready to receive the returning penitent; but he gives no countenance to the doctrine of indefectible grace: a doctrine which would practically make all penitence unnecessary, and exhibit only the violation of the Divine justice by the abuse of the Divine mercy.

The importance of thus marking the differences between regeneration and renovation, is to be felt in its restraint on fanaticism. In every age of heresy, fanaticism has fastened on the new birth, as its especial privilege. If the fanatic was sincere, he regarded himself as its possessor by an immediate act of Heaven. If insincere, he made it the cover for his imposture. Regeneration in infancy was too remote and too simple for the fervour of the one, or for the fraud of the other. The new birth at the moment of conviction, the sudden elevation from the level of religious life, the direct impulse of the Holy Spirit, the rending of the darkness in which man is wrapped by the narrowness of human faculties, have all been the principle or the pretext of fanaticism. If those fantasies have now died away, who can tell how soon they may again be summoned from the tomb! While man has passion to stimulate him, ignorance to blind him, or ambition to inflame him, fanaticism will be the armoury in which he will find the most dangerous and the most manageable weapons. Where every man can assume a divine impulse; where every man can assume sudden sanc-

tity; and where every man can appeal to the extravagance of his conduct for the sincerity of his faith; the preparative is the cheapest, and the effect the most irresistible. We have the whole religious history of Europe for our warning.

CHAPTER IX.

ANABAPTISM.

The origin of Anabaptism is lost in the darkness which, from the sixth to the twelfth century, covered Europe. In that vast period the blackest superstition, sustained by the bitterest tyranny, held the human mind and body in subjection. But, God did not wholly leave Himself without witness. Men of vigorous intellects and bold hearts carried the truth from nation to nation; but the light was in a sepulchre—it found no sustenance in the surrounding atmosphere, and it was extinguished in the very hands of its bearers.

Even the Christianity of this disastrous period was scarcely Christian. Living in ages when the art of printing was unknown, unable to procure the Scriptures, or to read them if they had been procured; flying from persecution, or resisting it with the fierceness of peasant retaliation, the early converts, among the fastnesses and forests of Western Italy

and Southern France, exhibited every eccentricity of a life of solitude, of ignorance, and of uncontroul. Even the woods and mountains to which they were driven must have contributed to their stern and sullen character. When the Reformation rose broad and full over Europe, its first effect on them was, like daylight suddenly thrown into mines and caverns, startling and confusing their dwellers, trained only to the helpless habits of darkness, and guided only by the rude instincts of nature.

It is, perhaps, thus alone that Ecclesiastical History can account for the first excesses of the Reformation. The gloomy enthusiasm, the rough prejudices, the repulsive habits, and the fantastic doctrines, which scared the eye of rational Christianity, were the product of six centuries of darkness and fear. Yet it is not denied, that the power of Christianity exhibited anew its ancient miracles on human character; that out of those rude materials it wrought noble things; that it raised up aspiring intellects, heroic hearts, generous spirits full of the thoughts which defy alike the temptations and the terrors of the world, and far-sighted spiritual legislators for the establishment of the Church of God on foundations firm as the world!

Among those wild sects the Anabaptists had dated their origin from the fourth century; and, like all sects which professed to take the Scriptures for their guide, they had commenced with truth. Their

especial doctrine was the Visible Kingdom of our Lord on Earth—that most illustrious doctrine which formed the Constitution of the Primitive Church, which constitutes the supreme subject of prophecy, and which supplies the magnificent consummation to the whole cycle of the sacrifices, the sufferings, and the triumphs of the Saviour.

But they soon degraded this high doctrine, they were tempted by frivolities and fictions. While Rome was yearly canonizing saints and hourly fabricating miracles, it was not unnatural, that her feeble antagonists should envy either her faculties of peopling Heaven, or her power of controuling earth. The believers in the visible reign of Christ were betrayed into the dangerous delusion, that the Kingdom was again at hand; that it was to be the inheritance of the living saints; that the Sovereignty was to be universal, and that the saints were to be superior to all human laws; their formal declaration being "The Kingdom of Heaven is an assembly of real saints, and ought to be therefore inaccessible to the unrighteous." This was the theory, the next maxim was the practice.—"This assembly of true saints ought to be exempt from all those institutions which human prudence suggests, to arrest the progress of iniquity, and to correct and reform transgressors." This language appears so paradoxical, so direct a challenge to all civil authority, and so daring a defiance to the common understanding of society; that we could scarcely

receive it on the strongest testimony of the Historian. But the facts soon supplied the testimony.

As acknowledged saintship was thus necessary for entrance into their covenant, they rejected Infant Baptism; and demanded that all adults baptized only in infancy, should be rebaptized; a custom from which the sect derived its especial name.

It is memorable, that no great doctrine of Scripture can be ever denied, or diluted, with impunity. The moral deviation rapidly descends into the practical evil; and what was once simple transgression against the simplicity of the revealed word is enlarged into public crime, and punished by national infliction. Thus, the early doubts on the Divinity of our Lord were at length visited by the factions, the corruptions, and the murders of Arianism. Thus, the later doubts on the doctrine of Justification by Faith were at length embodied and envenomed into Popery, and were punished by the long slavery of the human mind, and the long havoc of Europe. And thus, lastly, the denial of Infant Regeneration, extended and fomented into the fierce Sectarianism of the German Anabaptists, flung a large portion of Europe into formidable disturbance; roused civil slaughters, threw back the Reformation, and, in the loss of baptism to millions of infants, produced spiritual evil, perhaps only inferior to Arianism and Popery.

As if a darker influence than that of man was at work, this evil first broke out in the very birth-place

of the Reformation, Saxony. The Reformation was too deliberate for the rapid movement, and too cold for the feverish ambition of the Anabaptists. Luther denounced them in vain. Within three years from his first preaching in Wittemberg, he saw the Church assailed by a more dangerous enemy than Rome.

The Anabaptists had suddenly begun to use weapons against which reason was helpless. The contempt of Scripture always pays its penalty, in the confusion of the understanding. The Anabaptists, in rejecting infant regeneration, were inevitably driven to the doctrine of visible conversion. All now became the work of inspiration. The Continent rapidly abounded with preachers, declaring themselves instruments of the Holy Spirit. Visions and predictions were the celestial evidence of a mission destined to overthrow the ancient abuses of the earth. The zeal of passion, the dexterity of imposture, and the desire of possession, combined to sweep the heavy formalities of life before them; and the result was a Superstition, which, compounded of every kind of motives, enthusiastic, and worldly; like a mountain flood descending from the clouds, but swelled by the swamps and streams of the plain, spread calamity over some of the most flourishing districts of Germany, and convulsed the whole.

Faction, as is always the case in the narrative of religious novelty, soon mingled in the general tumult.

The peasantry, stung by real or imaginary grievances, eagerly joined leaders who offered sovereignty to all the Saints. The three chiefs, Munzer, Stubner, and Sturck, found themselves at the head of thousands; and with a rustic army pouring in from Suabia, Thuringia, and Franconia, they began the march to universal empire!

But, the German sovereigns were now alarmed; troops were hastily collected, a battle was fought, the undisciplined peasantry melted away before the squadrons of the Elector of Saxony; Munzer was taken and executed, and the Anabaptist war was buried in its own blood.

But the evil had already spread too widely, to be extinguished by a single defeat; and Anabaptism had already found strenuous partizans in Switzerland and Holland. At this period, from an insurrection it had began to shape itself into a Church, and condensing its extravagances into system, issued a Creed. This Creed contained the following heads: "That the Church of Christ ought to be exempt from all sin. That among the faithful all goods ought to be in common. That all tithe and tribute ought to be abolished. That Infant Baptism was a device of Satan. That every Christian had power to preach the Gospel. That consequently the Church stood in no need of Ministers. That in the kingdom of Christ, magistrates were wholly useless. And,

that the Almighty still spoke, as of old, to his chosen servants by dream and vision."

Persecution, the worst of all arguments, now raged against the Anabaptists, and failed. The sect flourished, and continued to spread through the most intelligent portions of Europe. At length, in 1533, twelve years after their outbreak in Saxony, they appeared in arms again. A fanatical levy rushed upon the city of Munster, took it by surprise, and, declaring the city the New Jerusalem, proclaimed their leader, Bockhold (John of Leyden), king. The monarch showed his sense of royalty by marching naked through the streets, and his sense of sanctity by taking eleven wives. But Munster was soon besieged by the troops of Count Waldeck, its sovereign, and was captured after a desperate resistance; Bockhold was executed, and the Anabaptist cause broken in Germany.

During the siege, Bockhold made daring efforts to procure adherents. He declared that God had made a gift to him of the cities of Amsterdam, Deventer, and Wesel, and he sent bishops to preach the Kingdom in them. Delirium never exceeded the grave follies and sanctified outrages of those revolters against all the dictates of common sense and all the principles of religion. Their name at length became one of public horror, and the sword fell heavy upon them. Their refusal of baptism to infants, and their

giving it to adults, had taken the colour of a public crime, and the Anabaptists were on the point of being hunted from among mankind [1].

If those enormities had been perpetrated in the old forest life of the North, they might have been regarded as the natural result of barbarism; or if they had first exhibited their blasphemy and bloodshed under the despotic superstition of Popery, they might have been attributed to infuriated ignorance revenging itself on remorseless tyranny. But, as the acts of a period signalized by the most powerful advance of the human mind, and consecrated by the purest labours of religion; they hold up a memorable warning of the madness of superseding Scripture by the insolent fancies of man. The career of the German Anabaptists is one of the blackest pages in the history of infatuation.

At length, the punishment was exhausted; and the sect was suffered to rest, under the management of a man of intelligence and moderation, Menno Simon, a Frieslander (1536). Menno spent the remainder of his life in traversing Europe, to visit their little scattered congregations; and by abandoning their principles of revolt, and discontinuing their pretences to supernatural aid, slowly brought them within the endurance of society.

[1] Mosheim, Eccl. History, Cen. xvi.

The death of Menno (1561) closed the national agitation of the Anabaptists. They thenceforth, under the general title of Mennonites, occupied themselves in domestic divisions: one portion priding itself on retaining the old rigidity of their fathers; another in adapting their habits to the age. The Flemings soon separated from the Frieslanders, and the Germans from both. The Waterlandians, a name given from a district in Holland, sometimes formed a separate section, and sometimes comprehended the whole. In those solemn triflings and minute dislocations the Anabaptists exercised, and absorbed, the fiery temperament which had once aspired to shake all thrones. They have long since ceased to disturb the peace of nations.

In Germany they still suffer no civil rulers in their communion, and refuse to take on themselves the offices of magistracy; they deny the lawfulness of repelling force by force, and protest against all war. They also object to oaths in a court of justice. All those tenets being founded on their ancient conception of a Kingdom of the Saints, in which, as no crimes can be committed, no civil guardianship can be necessary. Rigidly rejecting Infant Baptism, they regard the Sacraments merely as signs and symbols of the blessings contained in the Gospel. In some of those notions, resembling the Quakers; like them, they affect to despise secular science, while, like

them, they add nothing to theological enquiry. Their ideas of the Incarnation have been chimerical—

> " Esse Deum statuunt alii, sed corpore carnem
> Humanam sumpto sustinuisse negant.
> At Diam mentem, tenuis quasi fauce canalis,
> Per Mariæ corpus Virginis îsse ferunt[2]."

Against this old scholastic fiction some of their Sections protest; but the chief difficulty is, to ascertain the actual sentiments of any portion of a body at once so fluctuating and so obscure.

It is impossible to conceive, why Anabaptism should have thus rushed into absurdity; except on the principle, that when man deserts the simplicity of sacred truth, the God of truth delivers him over to infatuation. But, this principle pervades the whole history of religious error. It accounts for the revolting follies, the sensual guilt, and the visionary frenzies of heathenism. It accounts for the oracular ravings, the sullen asceticism, and the profane prophecies, of the Montanists. It accounts for the outbursts of Manichæism under Faustus, in the fourth century. Even Mahometanism arose from the corruptions of the Greek theology mingling with the savage superstitions of the Desert; like two chemical fluids, each comparatively inactive, until they are poured together, and explode. Wherever the Ana-

[2] Bolandus.

baptist trod, his track was marked by the arrogance, and by the sufferings, of religious mania. He lived denouncing all authority, and he died singing hymns under the hands of the executioner. After the tumult had sunk in Germany, a sect started up in Holland, headed by David George. On his death, charges of so foul a kind were brought against him, that the Senate of Basle, in which canton he had planted his followers, ordered his body to be dug up and burned. If those charges may have been exaggerated by ignorance, or envenomed by hostility, it is not denied that he regarded himself as inspired; an admission which may justify every colour of every charge.

At the same period (1555) Nicholas, a Westphalian, founded in Holland "The Family of Love;" His chief tenet being, that the essentials of all virtue consisted in the feelings of divine love; and his authority for teaching being the conviction of his own commission from Heaven. The hazards of those ecstasies are too obvious to require illustration, but they painfully prove the necessity of adhering to the strong and pure verities of Scripture.

In England, the followers of Menno have adopted the name of Baptists; from their disavowing the Anabaptist custom of re-baptizing the adults who joined them from other Sects. Even here they have contrived to separate into two great divisions, the General and the Particular, totally differing on the most important points of controversy—the Gene-

ral Baptists following the Arminian doctrine, the Particular the Calvinistic. But, except for the refusal of Baptism to their unfortunate infants, they might be forgotten in any present view of the religious anomalies of England. They produce nothing. From time to time, by the mere casualty of nature, a man of ability, a Hall, or a Forster, has appeared among them; but they have offered no succession of literature, no profound scholarship, no vigorous theology, no original addition to the general stores of the understanding of man [3].

[3] As the practice of immersing in the presence of the people has been lately resumed, under circumstances calculated to attract public attention, a brief narrative of an open-air baptism is given from "Robinson's History of Baptism."

"Some years since, at Whittleford, near Cambridge, forty-eight persons were baptized in the ford of the river. In the morning about 1500 people had assembled. The late Dr. Andrew Gifford, teacher of a Baptist congregation in London, ascended a moveable pulpit near the river. Round him stood the congregation, people on horseback, in coaches, and in carts, forming the outer circle. All were uncovered, and there was a profound silence. The preacher first gave out a hymn, which the congregation sang. He then delivered a sermon on the text, 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.' At the close of the sermon another hymn was sung.

"After some interval, the 'Administrator,' in a long black gown of baize, without a hat, and with a small New Testament in his hand, came down to the river-side with several Baptist Ministers, and the persons to be baptized. The men came first, two and two, dressed as usual, except that instead of coats, they had long white baize gowns, tied with a sash. The women followed, also two and two, all neatly dressed, in gowns of white

In the ceremonial of Adult Baptism there is *hitherto* no peculiar injury; but, in a country like ours, where population is presumed to increase at the rate of 300,000 a year, its present forms would be wholly inadequate to the Baptism of an adult population. Those precautions and preparations of order and decorum would be impossible, in the instance of such multitudes; and immersion must soon be, as it was in the Church of Constantinople, the source of extreme offence to public propriety.

I now briefly give another exemplification of the

linen or dimity. Each had a long silk cloak tied over her shoulders, a broad ribbon tied over the gown beneath the breast, and a hat on her head. They all ranged themselves by the water-side.

"The Administrator then read a hymn, which the people sang; then the portion of Scripture, which is read in the Greek Church on the same occasion, the Baptism of the Ethiopian; then, after expounding the verses, he took one of the men by the hand, and led him into the water, saying, 'See, here is water, what doth hinder? If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized.' Then saying, 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,' he leaned the man backward, and dipped him once. The man was then led to the house to be dressed. The other men were similarly immersed. The women were then baptized. A female friend took off, at the water-side, the hat and cloak; a deacon led one to the Administrator, and another from him; and a woman at the water-side took each as she came out of the river, and conducted her to an apartment in the house, where they dressed themselves.

"The whole closed with a general meeting of the baptized in the hall, where the Administrator gave a short discourse on civil and religious liberty, the sufficiency of Scripture, the pleasures of a good conscience, and the prospect of immortality."

peril of rejecting a great doctrine of Scripture, for a human suggestion. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Methodism first produced any powerful impression in England; the name had belonged to a feeble sect in the century before.

It is not my purpose to detail the doctrines or the practices of Methodism; I advert merely to its distinguishing tenet,—Adult Regeneration. The two leaders, Whitfield and Wesley, enforced their doctrine of the new birth with memorable popularity: Both possessed of talents: Whitfield a man of strong natural eloquence, Wesley a man of singularly persuasive speech; both preaching for the multitude, and preaching with the ardour, boldness, and novelty, which win the multitude. The doctrine of instantaneous conversion,—of the sudden penetration of the Holy Spirit to the heart,—of light pouring through the old darkness of the mind,—of the total release of the human soul from the chains of Satan,—and of the conscious triumph of grace,—were topics, which fell on the popular mind, like a torch into a magazine.

But, it is always to be solemnly remembered; that in all the conversions of Scripture, there is not a single example of physical convulsion. Horror never startles the Apostolic converts into virtue; ecstasy never seals their rescue from ruin. The test is always practical. "If ye love me, *keep my commandments*," is the calm but secure evidence of conversion de-

manded by Christ. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that *doeth the will* of my Father, which is in heaven." One great value of this high declaration is, that it furnishes every man with a standard of his own progress in Christianity. It relieves his religion from the fluctuations of nerves, and brings it to the evidence of facts; an evidence perfectly manageable by the mind. Our Lord further pronounces, that the most emphatic appearances of Christian security, even the possession of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, must not be considered as proofs of spiritual safety. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not *prophesied* in thy name? and in thy name have *cast out devils?* and in thy name done many *wondrous works?* and then will I profess unto them, I *never knew you:* depart from me, ye that work iniquity[4]." It is true, that salvation is not the purchase of any works of man, but is the free gift of the Atonement, a mighty operation which God took upon Himself alone; but, it is not less true, that the works of man are the signs of the faith of man; and that every man can confirm his hope, invigorate his faith, and illumine his spiritual knowledge, only by his increase under God in the works of Christian virtue.

We find this substantial labour of virtue the character of Christianity, even in its most incomplete

[4] Matt. vii. 22, 23.

development. When John comes to call his nation to the "remission of sins," he practically combines that remission with the performance of the common duties of life. And he brings the principle direct, and down to their capacities, by pressing it on their peculiar conditions.

To the peasant he recommends the good offices of peasant life.—"He that hath two *coats*, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath *meat*, let him do likewise." To the publican (the Roman tax-gatherer) he does not commend the good offices of peasant life; he commands the avoidance of extortion. —"Exact no more than that which is appointed to you." To the soldier he does not commend abstinence from the vices of the publican's life: he prohibits injury, false accusation, and rapine.—"Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages[5]." In all those transactions, which are the actual institute of Christianity, there is not the slightest reference to mere sensibilities, there is no demand that men shall "believe that they are saved" as the first step to salvation; no summons to those feelings which so early bewilder the sense of right and wrong. No man can learn from John those fancies, which make the height of their fever the measure of their sanctity; inflame the zealot into the lunatic; and arm the persecutor with the most terrible of all his

[5] Luke iii. 14.

weapons,—the plea, that in the rack and the scaffold he is "doing God service."

But the Father of mankind has not so dealt with his infirm children. Seeing, as none other can see, the materials of explosion which lie condensed in the human heart, He has not left them to the chance of every flash from the skies: knowing the distempered power by which man can raise up visions of fury and folly before himself,—alone measuring the danger of that struggle against the thrones and principalities of spiritual darkness, to which all are exposed, and to which perhaps all are summoned,—He gives us one rule; of such perfect simplicity, that it may be comprehended by every man; and of such infallible rectitude, that it can deceive no man. "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a *doer of the work*, this man shall be *blessed in his deed*[6]."

The first effects of Wesley's and Whitfield's preaching were the natural result of talent and fervour. Addressing the lower ranks, they probably awoke many minds, even of the populace. They might eventually have advanced from awaking the populace to awaking the nation. Religion in England, deeply wounded by the Civil War; disgusted by the foreign vices of the Restoration, harassed by the

[6] James i. 25.

political struggles of the Revolution, and alienated by the factious contempt of all principle, which alternately placed a Bolingbroke and a Walpole beside the throne; had sunk into the languor of formality, if not into the silence of despair. In such a time, those two men might have performed the noblest work of patriotism, the restoration of the national virtue. In England all true reform must come from the higher orders.—The vapour that ascends from the ground, poisons the atmosphere and embarrasses the day; the cloud that renews the freshness of the air, and leaves the brighter sky, must first gather on the pinnacles of the hills.

But the preaching of the New Birth inevitably kept them down to the level of the populace. When men are told, and justly, that Regeneration is essential to their entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven; but told, unjustly, that this Regeneration is still to come, and that its existence is to be known only by Conversion; the next question necessarily is, by what evidence is conversion itself to be known?

On such subjects the million may be indifferent; but, men suddenly struck with a consciousness of guilt; standing before God, alarmed by the possibilities of falling into the hands of judgment before another sunrise; stung with astonishment at the long-suffering which has spared them through so many years of evil; and *told that they must have a "New Birth,"* will not, and cannot, be content with

the simple conversion, which consists in daily virtue. Realizing before their mind's eye the irrevocable ruin and deliberate agonies of despair beyond the grave, and believing that their only safety is in the violences of *visible* conversion; they will have those violences. Like the Jews rejecting the simplicity of Jesus, they will demand the sign from Heaven.

To such men the true doctrine of relief would be, that God has already planted in the heart of the infant, in baptism, a principle of redemption; which has only to be cherished, to ensure the spiritual safety of the man; that the Christian is already by his regeneration the "temple of the Holy Ghost;" and that the whole duty of man is, by the aid of that Holy Ghost, to purify his temple of the idols which passion, and ignorance, a frail heart and a faithless world, have raised upon its altar.

But, once taught to deny infant Regeneration, they are driven to seek for it in mature extravagance. In the early period of Wesley's preaching, some French fanatics, calling themselves prophets, had taught the people the art of convulsion. Wesley, a man of a clear head, and a scholar [7], was disgusted by those displays, and spoke strongly against them. "They are enthusiasts," said he, and his language has something of the enthymeme—"for,

[7] He had been distinguished at Christ Church for logical acuteness, and was afterwards Fellow of Lincoln, and Greek Lecturer.

first, they think to attain the end without the means, which is enthusiasm, properly so called. And again, they think themselves inspired by God, and are not: but false imagination is enthusiasm; and that theirs is only imaginary enthusiasm appears from this—it contradicts the Law and the Testimony."

A woman, calling herself a prophetess, appeared in London. Wesley, with four or five of his friends, went to visit her. She asked, "why they came?" Wesley answered, "To try the Spirits, whether they be of God." The prophetess first fell into a species of general convulsion; she then began to speak, but with much convulsive interruption; what she said was in Scriptural language, and she spoke as in the person of God, and under immediate inspiration! She exhorted them not to be in haste in judging her spirit, but to wait upon God, and "He would teach them, if they conferred not with flesh and blood."

Some of the company were much impressed, and believed that she spoke by the Spirit, but Wesley remained unconvinced. "This," said he, "is in no wise clear to me. The emotion might be either hysterical or artificial. The same words any person of a good understanding, and well versed in the Scriptures, might have spoken. But, I let the matter alone, knowing this, that if it be not of God it will come to nought." Thus, the solemn council of Gamaliel on the preaching of the Apostles, was to be degraded into the impunity of a foolish or

knavish pretender. We can scarcely be surprised, that so flexible a 'trier of the spirits' should so soon fall into the snare! From this period convulsions followed his own preaching; wherever he went, people dropped down in outcries and hysterics. "The pains, as of hell," says Wesley, "got hold of them."

Whitfield objected to those displays, and doubted them; but, on his next preaching at Bristol four persons dropped down in convulsions; and Wesley's remark was, "From this time I trust we shall all suffer God to carry on his own work, in the way that pleaseth Him."

The convulsions now became customary. "Wherever Wesley preached, the same effects were produced; some of the people were always 'cut to the heart,' they were 'seized with strange pangs,' they 'terribly felt the wrath of God abiding on them,' they were 'constrained to roar aloud,' while the sword of the Spirit was 'dividing asunder their souls and spirits, and joints and marrow[8].'"—Such was the time!

Field-preaching added to the popularity of Methodism in the towns; itinerancy carried it through the country. The convulsions were conceived by some to be the demonstration of Satan, and to be accounted for like the demoniacs of Scripture; but, by others they were conceived the impulses of Heaven, and their result, conversion.

[8] Southey's Life of Wesley, p. 281.

Against this result Wesley's brother Samuel strongly remonstrated. "Your followers fall into agonies: I confess it," was the language of his manly letter. "They are freed from them after you have prayed over them: granted. They say it is God's doing: I own they say so. Dear brother; where is your ocular demonstration? Where indeed is the *rational proof?* Their living well afterwards may be a probable and sufficient argument, that they believe themselves: but it goes no further.

"I must ask a few more questions. Did those agitations ever begin during the use of any Collects of the Church; or during the preaching of any sermon, that had before been preached within consecrated walls without that effect; or during the inculcating of any other doctrine *besides that of your new birth?*"

Waterland, in his clear and strong style, has marked the evils of this preaching.

1. "The first reflection that I have to make is, that it is improper to call upon those who have been once regenerated in their infancy, to be regenerated again; or to lead them to expect a new birth. Such applications might properly be directed to Jews, Turks, or Pagans."

2. "I may next observe, how *mischievous* this is, in many ways. The telling of the common people that they ought *now* to be regenerated; instead of telling them that they ought, with God's grace,

speedily to *repent* and *amend;* is giving them only a dark lesson, instead of a clear one, and throwing mists before their eyes in a most momentous article. If, instead of reminding them to preserve and repair the regeneration which they received in their Baptism, they are called on to receive a *second*, they may be led off from looking back to their baptismal vows, which are excellent lessons of true Christian piety. A further mischief likely to happen in this way, is, that many, instead of carefully searching into their lives past, to see wherein they have *offended*, which is one of the first steps towards conviction, remorse, and *serious amendment;* may be apt to go in quest of what they call *impulses*, or inward feelings of the Spirit. But, what is worst of all, and what has *frequently happened*, is, that when men become more ambitious of the *honour* and *authority* which the name of the Spirit carries with it, they will be prone to follow any imagination of their own, and presumptuous enough to fasten it upon the blessed Spirit of God."

3. "As to *marks* or *tokens* of regeneration, men should have asked for marks of a *renewed heart.* And what marks could a man pitch upon, to satisfy *himself*, in such a case, but *a good conscience?* Or what marks, to satisfy *others*, but a *good life?* Some Christians there are,—I hope, many,—who, having been regenerated at the font, have been so preserved by God's grace, in conjunction with their own pious,

persevering endeavours, as never to have experienced any considerable decays of the spiritual state. Must they be called on to recollect the day, week, month, or year of their conversion or regeneration, who, from their Christian infancy, have never been in an unconverted or unregenerate state at all? Or must the same marks, suppose of strong conviction, fearful compunction, stinging remorse — nigh to despair, and the like, be sought for in such persons, who have loved and served God sincerely all their days?"

Wesley's own test of this new birth in mental and bodily tortures, that "if it were not of God it would come to nought," was finally given; the convulsionary conversions, after some period, were heard of no more. His field-preaching ceased to be followed; and even Whitfield lost his audiences, and seems to have borne the loss without much evidence of his philosophy. Wesley, probably, by founding a species of establishment, escaped this mortification, and continued influential, to an advanced age.

That the striking appeals of those two men, who undoubtedly possessed the natural talent of oratory, startled many of the multitude, who had long been sunk in the depths of vice, is perfectly probable; that drunkards and other profligates were occasionally reformed; and that the colliers of Kingswood, and the miners of Cornwall, may have exhibited signs of reformation, on hearing truths which they perhaps never heard before; is all within the limits of eccle-

siastical experience. But the result of the original error in their preaching is, the alienation of nearly a million and a quarter of Englishmen from the mild government and scriptural teaching of the Church—a most gratuitous Schism, which, though it may not amount to actual injury, still sustains a minor and peevish irritation; exhibits a poor petulance and worthless activity in small parochial squabbles; turns a mortified visage on every generous effort of the Establishment; and makes a virtue of standing aloof from the apostolical labours of a Church, contending for Christianity throughout the world.

But the Church of Christ knows nothing of vindictiveness; and she could not at this hour adopt a nobler labour than the recall of the Wesleyans to her communion [9].

[9] Methodism has long felt the weakness of dissension. Even in its beginning, Whitfield and Wesley sprang "wide as the poles asunder;" Whitfield taking the views of Calvinism, and Wesley those of Arminianism; though it might be difficult to explain how both could have been equally under the guidance of the same Divine Spirit. That chasm has never been closed.

In 1797 a new feud exhibited a "New Methodist Connexion;" which bitterly charged the old with tyranny. Another feud is now disturbing the body; on the charge of arbitrary dismissals of its preachers.

It would probably be a service, neither tedious nor operose, to restore the whole Methodist population to the Establishment. Its doctrines are the same, its differences of discipline are shadowy, and its hostility has long since dwindled down into petty

An attempt to exhibit the visible gifts of the Holy Ghost is among the recollections of our own time; and even the pretext of the "gift of tongues" could find followers in the credulity of the multitude. But this fantasy, too, passed away: the public understanding rejected "miracles," which had in them nothing miraculous; and refused to believe in revelations, alike incomprehensible to the utterer and the hearer.

Whether, in the confusion of his "mystery," the leader of this short-lived sect preached the New Birth as the foundation of his doctrine, it might be difficult to discover; but the fiction of the "New Birth" in the adult is scarcely separable from the modern claim of Inspiration; and that claim will be either the principle of religious folly, or the pretence of religious imposture, to the end of the world!

personalities, and votes in vestries. Some provision for its preachers would be necessary, and many of them might be continued in their office; for many are sincere men. The experiment would be in the purest principle of Christianity.

CHAPTER X.

THE REFORMERS.

OPINION is valueless in the face of facts. For, opinion may be ignorant, through want of opportunity; or may be partial, through unconscious prejudice; and *must* be fallible, because human. One fact of Scripture is worth all the opinions of all mankind. If we find infant regeneration in Scripture, it should be a matter of perfect indifference to us, whether it has not been seconded by a single voice on earth, or whether it has been carried in the acclamation of the world.

But, as the opinions of the founders of Protestantism have been lately alleged against their acts; as their presumed perplexities have been argued into a denial of their palpable determinations; and as we are now called on to nullify their actual words, in consideration of their possible thoughts; it may be satisfactory to show, by a few brief examples, that the Reformers were *not* hostile to the Reformation!

In a former chapter, a slight sketch was given of

the principal testimonies to Infant Baptism, from the Christian era to the end of the fourth century. A similar sketch will now be given of its testimonies from the rise of the Reformation.

LUTHER.

The name of Luther is in itself a history—the History of the Reformation; whose noblest part was born with him, and would have died with him, but for its transfer to England. His great quality was a glowing heart. The corruptions of Rome had long been the subject of ridicule to the learned, and of scorn to the multitude. Brave men had asserted the wrongs of the human mind, and had consecrated their cause in their blood. But Luther was the first, who assaulted Popery on its throne. He alone exhibited the resolution to combat it to the last, and live or die in the struggle. Luther, among all men, was the champion; he threw the first stone at the giant, and fixed it in his forehead.

Of Regeneration says this great interpreter of Scripture, "I call Baptism *not* a corporal or outward washing, but the *washing of Regeneration*[1]. To put on Christ evangelically is not a matter of imitation, but of *birth* and *new creation*, when, namely, I am clothed with Christ Himself."

Of the change from the sons of Adam to the sons of God, he says, "This is not done by any

[1] Serm. on Salvation.

change of vestment, or by any law or works, but by the *new birth* and renewal which takes place at baptism; as St. Paul says, 'Whoever of you are baptized, have put on Christ.' "According to his mercy, He saved us by the washing of Regeneration;" for besides that they are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Spirit to heavenly righteousness and eternal life in Baptism, there is kindled a new life and flame; there arise *new* and *holy affections*, new trust in God, hope; there ariseth a new will [2]."

Of the institution of Baptism, "God has ordained that the word and baptism should be administered for this purpose, that man might be saved, that is, freed from sin and death, that he might be a partaker of eternal life, and of the kingdom of Heaven [3]."

Of infant baptism. "Moreover, when we speak of the word of the Gospel, we also include the Sacraments, for they have the promise of the Holy Spirit annexed, as well as the *remission of sins*. Thus Peter, when asked what was to be done? replies, '*Repent*, and let each be *baptized* in the name of Jesus.' And Christ says, 'Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not come into the Kingdom of God.' This view is manifest, that the Holy Spirit wills, by means of baptism, to exert his influence with efficacy on the mind. So, Peter also says, 'And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.'

[2] Comm. on Galat. iii. [3] Hom. de Baptismo, vol. vii.

"And this, too, is the cause why we bring infants also to baptism, following the example of the Apostles and the primitive Church. For, because it is certain that the Holy Spirit *wills to be efficacious* through the water of Baptism, we determine that the action of the Holy Spirit is in the same point of view unimpeded."

BEZA.

A Frenchman, a Romish priest, a Protestant convert, and a distinguished Greek scholar. He resided chiefly in Geneva, where he became the colleague and friend of Calvin. From this period he was regarded as a pillar of the Reformed Church, and bore a principal part in its negociations and public affairs. He made a translation of the New Testament into Latin, which is clear and simple, and still retains its rank in the literary labours of Protestantism. Beza was sincere and intelligent, but his conceptions were tinged with Calvinism, in contradiction to that better reason which frequently shows itself in the midst of his prejudices.

He says; "As to infants born in the Church and elect, but dying, before they come to the use of the understanding, I think, relying on the word of God, that *in birth* they are ingrafted in Christ [4]."

"We teach, that the signification of the divinely-

[4] G. 103.

instituted Sacraments is not empty, such as that of painted figures, and of other common representations, but joined with the very actual *communication of the things signified.*"

MELANCTHON.

A German, of the Palatinate, distinguished for early scholarship. Appointed Greek Professor in the University of Wittemberg, and thus becoming the associate of Luther, he was regarded as the next eminent leader of the Reformation. The connexion was of advantage to the good cause; the gentleness of Melancthon softening the violence of Luther—the ardour of Luther invigorating the languor of Melancthon.

He had a principal part in drawing up the celebrated Confession of Augsburg, was invited by sovereigns to visit their kingdoms, and enjoyed perhaps the most extensive and least obnoxious fame of any man of his memorable era.

At the Diet of Worms, Melancthon said, "The baptism of infants has been defended with success in the writings of many among us. We are, too, most of us, fathers of families, and certainly we reflect concerning the salvation of our children. How often have I heard the saying, 'It is not the will of my Father that one of those little ones should perish.'"

"We hold, that they in baptism are made the

Sons of God, that they receive the Holy Spirit, and that they abide in Grace so long as they do not lose it through actual sin, in that age which is now called capable of reason [5]."

CRANMER (martyred).

The learning, the services, and the sufferings of this remarkable man are too well known to the English Protestant, to be more than touched on here. It was Cranmer's misfortune to be fond of power, and to be placed within the temptations of a Court; to be fond of life, and to be tempted to the betrayal of his conscience by the dread of death. But, if his heart was feeble, his faith was sincere; if his statesmanship was perilous to his honour, his sufferings restored his name; and his resignation in the dungeon, and his fortitude on the scaffold, nobly redeemed the errors of his days of splendour.

Cranmer asks, "How can he be taken for a good Christian man, that thinketh that Christ did ordain his sacramental signs and tokens in vain, without effectual grace and operation? For, we might as well say, that the water in Baptism is a bare token, and hath no warrant agreed on in Scripture for any appeal at all. For, the Scripture speaketh not of any promise made to the receiving of a token or figure only. And so may be concluded, after your manner of reasoning, that, in baptism is no spiritual operation indeed,

[5] Works, vol. iv.

because that washing in water, in itself, is but a token, &c. &c. [6]

"The second birth is by the water of baptism, which Paul calleth the bath of Regeneration; because our sins be forgiven us in baptism, and the Holy Ghost is poured into us, as into God's beloved children. So that by the power and working of the Holy Ghost, we be born again spiritually, and made new creatures [7]."

HOOPER (martyred).

A monk of the Cistercian order, converted to Protestantism in the reign of Henry VIII. On the passing of the Six Articles Act, he fled to Switzerland. But, on the King's death, he returned to England, became eminent as a preacher, and was appointed Bishop of Gloucester by Edward VI. In this See he distinguished himself by personal virtue and pious diligence.

But, on the accession of Mary, of evil memory, he was sentenced as "an obstinate and irreclaimable heretic," and burned in his own Episcopal City.

Hooper says, "The Holy Sacraments are the *seals* of the Lord's promises, they are outward and visible pledges and gages of the inward faith, and are in number only twain: that is to say, 'baptism and the holy supper of the Lord.'

[6] Answer to Gardiner, l. 1. [7] Cranmer's Catechism.

"The which two are not void and empty signs, but full; that is to say, they are not only signs whereby something is signified; but also they are such signs as do exhibit and *give* the things which they signify indeed.

"I believe also, that baptism is the entry of the Church; a washing into a new birth; and a renewing of the Holy Ghost, whereby we do forsake ourselves, the devil, the flesh, sin, and the world.

"By his baptism we are changed and altered from 'the children of wrath,' . . . . and, for that cause, the same ought to be given and communicated only to reasonable creatures, which are apt and meet to receive such things, and not unto hells and such like [8]."

LATIMER (martyred).

The son of a papist, he was converted to protestantism by Bilney, at Cambridge. A series of bold sermons against the superstitions of Rome brought the hand of the Hierarchy on him, along with his teacher. Bilney recanted; and afterwards, in agony of mind, returned, sought martyrdom, and wiped away his shame in his blood. Latimer was released, and, on the ascendancy of protestantism, was appointed Bishop of Gloucester.

On the passing of the Six Articles Act; Latimer resigned his bishopric in disdain, and retired into pri-

[8] On the Creed.

vate life. But, after some of the vicissitudes common to the leaders of the Church in the reign of a capricious and cruel tyrant, he was brought to the stake on the accession of Mary.

This Confessor died with faith and firmness, predicting the triumph of the Reformation; a noble example to all, who in faithless days may be summoned to die for the name of the Redeemer.

Latimer says, "We are washed with water, and then the words are added, 'for we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' *whereby Baptism receiveth its strength.* Now, this Sacrament of Baptism is a thing of great weight; for, it *ascertaineth* and *assureth* us, that like as water washeth the body and cleanseth it, so the blood of Christ our Saviour cleanseth and washeth it from all filth of sins; and so, it appeareth, that we may not seek Christ in the glittering of this world. For, what is so common as water? Yet he professes to be found there, when he is sought with a faithful heart."

RIDLEY (martyred).

A man of talent and resolution; distinguished for classical learning, and still more eminent for his zeal in the cause of the Reformation. On the accession of Edward VI., Ridley was successively appointed to the Bishoprics of Rochester and London. On the death of Edward, the well-founded terrors of

the protestants, at the bigotry of Mary, induced Ridley to share in the attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne. But his protestantism was the great source of the charges brought against him. After a long confinement in the Tower, and a disputation before a committee of popish Bishops at Oxford, he was sentenced as "an obstinate heretic." He was burned, side by side with his brave old friend Latimer, in the Broad Street of Oxford, in 1555, a year to be for ever remembered in England.

Ridley says, "Now, if after the truth shall be truly tried out, it be found that the substance of the bread is the material substance of the sacrament. Although for the change of the use, office, and dignity of the bread, the bread is *sacramentally* changed into the body of Christ, *as the water in Baptism* is sacramentally changed *into the fountain of Regeneration*, and yet the material substance of it remaineth all one; as was before, &c.[9]"

GRINDAL.

A man of intelligence and vigour. Commencing his career, as a fellow of Cambridge, he was patronized by Ridley, whose chaplain he became. On the death of Edward VI. he fled into Germany, where he remained until the accession of Elizabeth. He was then successively appointed to the Archbishop-

[9] Declaration of the Lord's Supper.

rics of York and Canterbury. He was a strenuous prelate, and performed good service in the restoration of Church discipline. Exciting the displeasure of his honest, but arbitrary sovereign, his Archbishopric was finally resigned; the cause of resentment being his free and decided advice to leave the Government of the Church in point of doctrine to the Clergy, as the fittest for it, by their constitution. He was a protector of the exiled protestants of France, and was a high-minded and public-spirited man.

Grindal says, "In Baptism, men not greatly regard the water, but account themselves *washed in the blood of Christ*. So saith St. Paul. 'Whatsoever we be that are baptized, we are washed in the blood of Christ[10].' Wherefore, to the faithful receivers you may say, that the water of Baptism is the blood of Christ, and the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ; for to them it is no less than if the natures were changed[1]."

BUCER.

An Alsacian Monk, converted by Luther: a man of learning, and theological professor at Strasburg, for many years. Harassed in Germany, where he took a leading part in the public transactions of protestantism, and was one of the subscribers of the Interim; he was invited to England by Cranmer, and appointed to the professorship of theo-

[10] Romans vi.

[1] Custom and verity.

logy in Cambridge. Dying in England, his body was taken up and burned by the impotent malice of the popish throne. Bucer's pen was indefatigable; but his mildness of temper inclined him rather to soothe than to convince: it was for others to conquer.

In the Wittenberg conference, in 1536, held for the purpose of reconciling the Lutherans and Zuinglians, and in which Luther insisted on the several points,—that infants should be baptized; that their baptism was efficacious; and that by it they received adoption into the children of God; Bucer thus declared the opinion of the Zuinglians:

"We have faithfully contended against the enemies of Infant Baptism, as our writings witness. Baptism is counted sacred by us, and our doctrine treats thereof; not as concerning a naked symbol, but as concerning a true *laver of Regeneration*, which is exhibited to us by the virtue of God, and the office of the ministry, together with water.

"For we simply believe and teach, that to infants in baptism is communicated true *Regeneration*, and true adoption into the sons of God; and, that the Holy Spirit works in them, according to the measure given to them."

JEWEL.

A leading name of the Reformation, a strong thinker, an earnest preacher, and a profound controversialist; author of the ablest view of the Reformed

principles, the well-known "Apology[2] for the Church of England." But his fortitude was not equal to his feelings. The accession of Mary placed every conspicuous protestant in sudden peril, and Jewel was deprived of his Oxford professorship, as a first step to the stake. In a moment of weakness, which may well remind Christian men of the great precept, "Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall;" he subscribed a popish confession. But Popery, which had humiliated him, could not forgive; and Jewel was about to be brought to trial, as a heretic, when he fled into Germany. At Frankfort, in the presence of the Protestant exiles, he made a full acknowledgment of his grievous error, and was restored.

On the death of Mary, he returned to England, was received with distinction, and was appointed to the Bishopric of Salisbury. His talents now made him the natural head of all the great Ecclesiastical movements of his time. From St. Paul's cross he offered the memorable challenge to the popish world,—"to produce a single testimony from the first six centuries, to any one of the peculiar doctrines of popery." His defence of protestantism, was the chief argument of its age. It rapidly spread through all the languages of Europe, and was regarded as the most effectual instrument of the Reformation.

[2] The word Apology has degenerated into "Excuse," and, as in the case of Bishop Watson's answer to Paine, may be misunderstood. But, Ἀπολογία in the original sense, is degraded even by "Defence." Its true meaning was "Refutation."

He was one of the "shining lights," he wanted only nerve, to be one of the heroes, of Christianity.

Jewel says, "We are taught, not to seek that grace in the sign; but, to assure ourselves by receiving the sign, that it is given us by the thing signified. . . . The power of God, the grace of God the Holy Ghost, the gift of God, are not in the water, but in us, and we were not made because of the sacraments; but the sacraments were made for our sake[3]."

On Baptism and the consent of the Fathers, he says, "The fathers, in the Council of Nice, say thus, Baptism must be considered, not with our bodily eyes, but with the eyes of our mind. Thou seest the water; think then of the power of God that in the water is hidden." Chrysostom, speaking likewise of Baptism, saith thus, "The things that I see, I judge not by sight, but by the eyes of the mind: the heathen when he heareth of the water of baptism taketh it for plain water; but I see not simply or barely that I see, I see the *cleansing of the soul by the Spirit of God*." . . . . Tertullian saith, "The Holy Ghost cometh down, and halloweth the water." St. Basil saith, "The Kingdom of Heaven is there laid open." St. Bernard saith, "*Let us be washed in his blood*." By the authority of these ancient fathers, it is plain that, in the Sacrament of Baptism, by the sensible sign of water, the invisible grace of God is given unto us[4]."

[3] Treatise on the Sacraments. [4] Ibid.

HOOKER.

Author of the great work, "The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity" (1594), the defence of the Establishment against the Puritans. Living in the period between the struggles of Popery, and the agitations of Puritanism, Hooker's life was uneventful, and is to be marked only by the succession of his volumes, and the rise of his preferments. Fellow of Christchurch, Master of the Temple, a Prebendary, and Subdean, he thus went through a round of those minor preferments, which, to the majority, are temptations to sinecurism; but to him were stimulants to study. Called (less, however, by general conviction than by indolent acquiescence,) the "Judicious [5]," he was distinguished from his contemporaries, by the novelty of writing in a philosophical form, by a fearless search for principles, and by a calm magnitude of view. His style, though usually a chief topic of his panegyrists, is his *misfortune;* it has all the faults of a faulty age: though masculine, it is mannered; though argumentative, it is obscure; and though abounding in thought, its purport is often buried under its multitude of words. No man enters the field in more magnificent armour than Hooker, but his movements are obstructed by the weight of his

[5] Hooker's notions (1st and 8th Books) sometimes approach modern Democracy: they seem to have been the groundwork of Locke's more matured and guarded Essay.

panoply. An abstract of his "Polity" would be more valuable than the great work itself. We should thus have the gems, without the sand and clay of the mine.

Hooker, in the honesty of his heart, speaks with righteous contempt of the craft of evasion.

"I hold it for a most infallible rule, in expositions of sacred Scripture, that when a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this *licentious* and *deluding* art, which changeth the meaning of words, as alchemy doth—or would do, the substance of metals; maketh of any thing what it listeth, and bringeth in the end *all truth to nothing*."

. . . . "If, at the time when that Baptism which was meant by John, came to be really and truly performed by Christ Himself, we find the Apostles, who had been, as we are, before baptized; new baptized with the Holy Ghost; and in this their latter Baptism, as well a visible descent of fire, as a secret miraculous infusion of the Spirit,—if on us He accomplish likewise the heavenly work of our new birth, not with the Spirit alone, but with water thereunto adjoined, since the faithfullest expounders of his deeds are his own words, let that which his hand wrought declare what his speech did doubtfully utter. The true necessity of Baptism a few propositions considered will soon decide.

"All things, which are either known causes, or

set means, whereby any great good is usually procured, or men delivered from grievous evil, the same we must needs confess *necessary*.

"And, if *regeneration* were not, in this very sense, a thing *necessary* to eternal life; would Christ Himself have taught Nicodemus, that to see the Kingdom of God is *impossible*, saving only for those men who are born from above. *His* words following in the next sentence are a proof sufficient, that to our regeneration his Spirit is no less necessary than regeneration itself is necessary to life."

Hooker argues forcibly from the *especial* expressions of our Lord and the Apostles, to the *especial* nature of regeneration. It is evident that if it be the will of God to lead man into eternal happiness, his means of effecting this purpose are beyond all limit. If, then, he has told us of an especial way, chosen out of millions, why are we to doubt the validity, and directness of that way?

"Unless *as the Spirit is a necessary inward cause*, so water were *a necessary outward means to our regeneration*, what construction should we give to those words wherein we are said to be *new born*, and that even of water? Why are we taught, that with water God doth purify and cleanse his Church? Wherefore do the Apostles of Christ term Baptism *a Bath of Regeneration!* What purpose had they in giving men advice to receive outward Baptism, and in persuading them that it did avail to *remission of*

sins! The grace which is given them with their Baptism, doth so far depend on the outward Sacrament, that God will have it embraced, not only as a sign or token of what we receive, but as an instrument or means whereby we receive grace."

He then further defines Baptism, to be a Sacrament instituted by God, for the purpose of incorporating the receivers into Christ; and "so, through his most precious merit, obtain as well that saving grace of imputation which *taketh away all former guiltiness*, as also that infused Divine virtue of the Holy Ghost which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards newness of life[6]."

Jewel and Hooker have alike been charged with indecision on the subject of Baptism. But, even the brief quotations which have been given here resolve that charge into ignorance or imposture. I shall now quote no more. The names of Barrow and Beveridge, Sherlock and Tillotson, still retain their honour in the Church; and nothing can be more authentic than their adherence to this great doctrine of her liturgy.

But opinions should actually possess no place in the subject. We have the conclusions; the facts are before our eyes; the written law is in our hands. What argument can be found in flippant conjectures of what the makers of the law may have thought in the

[6] Eccl. Polity, l. v.

slow process of truth, or what shade is to be thrown on the solid results of their study, by the uncertainties which may have once passed through their minds? It is only for the fugitives from truth to take shelter behind opinions. It is only for combatants, who feel that they cannot stand in the field, to carry on their warfare, alike feeble and furtive, from the swamp and the thicket; to make darkness an auxiliary, and think escape a triumph. Among all the weaknesses of the antibaptismal heresy this is the weakest. But, without adverting to charges of garbling, the mere use of such an argument is fatal. It is a direct confession of helplessness; it implies a famine of fact; it is not a defence, but a surrender at discretion.

CHAPTER XI.

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

I PROCEED to prove, by what appears to me a new, and an unanswerable evidence, the scriptural truth of infant regeneration.

It may sound strangely, to express; that a great rite, divinely commanded three thousand years ago, established in the most remarkable of all nations, and practised widely through the world of antiquity, should be still imperfectly comprehended. Yet, with such research into authorities as it has been within my power to make, I have never found a satisfactory solution of that rite by which the Jewish infant was admitted into Judaism. It is known to the theologian, that the conjectures on this subject have exercised all the learning of conjecture; that by some it has been conceived a species of sacrificial form; by others, the covenant of purification, the כרת ברית; while Michaelis[1], who probably has

[1] Com. on Laws of Moses.

collected all the laborious conclusions of his countrymen on the subject, imagines the purpose to have been "the sign of a covenant into which the posterity of Abraham were to enter with the only true God, *to adore no other God but Him.*" He adds that "this purpose was the more intelligible, as it was a custom among the Egyptian priests; and that thereby Abraham and his descendants were to be regarded as priests, dedicated to the service of the true God."

But, we may well doubt a solution which takes every thing for granted: first, that the rite was borrowed from Egypt, of which we have no record whatever; next, the worship; and next, that Abraham and his descendants were made members of the Sacerdotal office. We may justly question the priesthood of *Ishmael*, of the bondslaves of the Hebrews, and of the whole body of the twelve tribes; for the rite was enjoined alike on them all [2].

[2] Besides the improbability that He, who has all means at his disposal, would select a rite for his people, taken from the customs of other nations, some of them already idolatrous; or that for a people peculiarly intended to be separate, He would take a rite common to many; or that under such circumstances it could be a *distinguishing* rite, which it was certainly intended to be.

We have evidence that at least the Arabs adopted the rite from Ishmael; they performing it in the thirteenth year. We are also to remember that the sons and grandsons of Abraham, after the death of Sarah, were thirteen; and that to avoid their interference with Isaac, he settled them throughout the East Country; that

The history of Abraham, with his successive revelations, must be our most authentic knowledge on the subject; and yet the consecutive features of that history seem to have been generally overlooked in those discussions.

Abraham [3] in his 60th year was called by God to leave Ur of the Chaldees; and in his 75th year, he was again called, to leave Haran and enter Canaan, and the promise was then given, that "in him should all the families of the Earth be blessed." In his 99th year the Covenant was given "that the land of Canaan should be his possession, and the possession of all his posterity, *for ever*." "I will give unto *thee*

the Sons of Ishmael were twelve, and were princes or chieftains in the south; that the name of Abraham himself as a man of miraculous visions and promises, might well have been potent in the East and South; and that, independently of the example of all those Colonies, a rite distinctly commanded by God, and commanded as a pledge of national prosperity and territorial possession, would be probably adopted by the warlike tribes of his time.

In addition; it is to be remembered, that all the histories of Egypt, Arabia, and the East, were at least a *thousand years* later than the era of Abraham. Unquestionably nothing has been found, either in argument or testimony, to shake the Jewish origin of the rite, or to derogate from its appointment, as exclusively by the divine command.

Its object has been as much the theme of fruitless disquisition among the writers of Germany as its origin. They generally regard it as "symbolum puritatis;" or as Herodotus says "*καθαριότητος εἵνεκα.*"

[3] A.M. 3258. B.C. 2153. Hale's Chron.

and *to thy seed after thee*, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an *everlasting possession*. And I will be their God."

The Covenant of the possession was thus declared. "This is my Covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee. *Every man child among you shall be circumcised.*" The child was to be taken into the Covenant at eight days old. The uncircumcised man-child was to be cut off from the people. "*He hath broken my covenant*[4]."

It is observable, that this Covenant was strictly local, and bound to the possession of Canaan, whose widest future limits had been already defined. And also that it was separate from the great promise, by which Abraham was to be the progenitor of the Messiah; a promise given in Haran four-and-twenty years before his entrance into Canaan, and before even the announcement of its name; the only declaration being, "a land which I shall show thee."

But this rite was Sacramental; for it had the "inward spiritual grace," as well as the "outward visible sign." The principle of Regeneration was implanted; from the beginning, the rite was the pledge of a *renewed nature*. It is in the language of Moses, thus recapitulating the Divine promise.

"And the Lord said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I sware unto their fathers

[4] Gen. xvii.

to give to them. And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?*" The Israelites were distinctly commanded to "*circumcise their hearts*, and be no more stiffnecked [5];" a change impossible, but by the Holy Spirit.

And in that final, and most detailed prophecy, which, while comprehending all the earlier banishments of the Jews, seems also to comprehend the present, last, and longest of those expulsions; Moses distinctly declares to the people, that the first act of God, in bringing them back, will be to "*Circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed*, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, *that thou mayest live* [6]."

This is a very remarkable passage; for it makes no reference to the *outward* renewal of the rite; which was virtually superseded by Christian Baptism: but fully refers to that *spiritual change*, which was once connected with the rite; and in the same language refers to the preaching of the Gospel, which will be *then* the religion of the regenerated Jew.

"For, this commandment which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who

[5] Deut. x. 16. [6] Deut. xxx. 6.

shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

"But the word is *very nigh unto thee*, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it [7]."

The true interpretation of this language, describing the renewed *birth* of the Nation, is to be found in the language of St. Paul, describing the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. . . . . For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into Heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above. . . . . But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: *that is, the word of faith, which we preach.* That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou *shalt be saved* [8]."

But, even while the rite continued, it is the constant declaration of the New Testament, that its

[7] Deut. xxx. 11—14. [8] Romans x.

whole value consisted in its spirituality; and that the Jew wholly forfeited his claim to the privileges of the Abrahamic covenant, when he forfeited his part in that spirituality.

"For he is not a Jew (an inheritor of the covenant), who is one (only) outwardly. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and *circumcision is that of the heart*, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God[9]."

Circumcision, *then*, though differing in its peculiar circumstances, was to the Jew, what Baptism is *now* to the Christian; the gift of a spiritual principle connected with an external observance,—a sacrament of Regeneration.

But, there is not only a similarity of principle; there is an identity of purpose: the express object of each, in its period, being, an entrance into the eternal Kingdom.

The covenant with Abraham was a promise, that to him and his posterity Canaan should be given for an *everlasting* possession. It is true that the twelve tribes, within five hundred years after, invaded it, and were its possessors. But, it is equally true, that this possession could not have fulfilled the original pledge; for though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, performed their part of the covenant, in submitting to the rite, they never possessed Canaan; living in tents, as

[9] Romans ii.

strangers and pilgrims; and further, acknowledging that this was the only life which they were to lead, until they descended into the grave. And this was also to be the life of all who were born in the long interval from Abraham to Moses: yet they all held the promise, and declared themselves confident of the possession.

St. Paul unanswerably adverts to those vast multitudes, "many as the stars of the sky in number," as standing in precisely the same circumstances with their great ancestor; as equally receiving the promise; as equally acknowledging that they were *never* to enjoy it during their mortal pilgrimage, and yet as equally confident in their ultimate possession. "These all *died in faith*, not having received (the performance of) the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

He then shows that this confession was, in itself, a proof that they looked forward to Canaan; because, if it had arisen from the mere irksomeness of feeling that they were strangers in another's land, they had the land of their ancestors, Chaldæa, lying open to them. "For they that say such things (who speak of themselves as strangers and pilgrims) declare plainly that they seek a country; but if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out (Chaldæa), they might have had opportunity to

have returned." Yet, the early descendants of Abraham, while in Canaan, remained living in tents, as wanderers; and, during the two hundred years of their dwelling in Egypt, remained strangers; still, making no movement towards Canaan; yet all dying in the conviction that they were hereafter to be its possessors: a conviction which to them could be realized only beyond the grave, and, of course, in a land prepared for immortals. And such is the direct language of the Apostle. "Now[1], they desire a better country; that is, a *heavenly*[2]."

[1] The word *now* is an insufficient translation. The original νυνί implies strong contrast, and here its meaning is, that the Israelites "were so far from" desiring to return to the paternal land, Chaldæa, that their desires were fixed on Canaan, and Canaan in the only condition in which they could ever expect to see it, namely, in a heavenly state, and to be reached only through resurrection. The general disregard of this distinction between νυνί and νῦν, in our translation, greatly impairs the energy of St. Paul's style. He constantly uses νυνί, and it is characteristic, for he is the only writer of the New Testament by whom it is used.

Bloomfield, in his "Annotations," refers to this sense, but slightly.

[2] This also explains the mysterious expression, "God is not ashamed to be called their God." This distinction is generally supposed to be "the reward of their faith." But the text refers to the original promise connected with the covenant of Canaan, "I will be their God;" and the Apostle represents this promise as renewed and realized, by his preparing for them "a heavenly city;" thus showing, that He has not been alienated, nor will be ashamed to acknowledge them, to the end.

The Apostle then clears up a point of especial importance. The general error of theologians on the subject of Canaan is, that its conquest was the completion of the promise to Abraham and his posterity. That it was in part a result of that promise, there can be no doubt: but the Apostle applies himself to prove that it was *not* a completion, and that it was not even the *peculiar* object of the promise. Taking a rapid view of the whole range of Jewish history, from the time of the conquest under Joshua;—Gideon with the Judges; David with the Kings, Samuel with the Prophets: the Martyrs who followed, from the Captivity down to the time of Epiphanes: thus comprehending the whole series of the earthly possession; he declares, *that they received not the promise.* Apparently, to prevent the supposition, that its fulfilment was impeded by deficiencies of their own faith, he distinctly tells us, that "they received a good report through faith:" and concludes by assigning the actual ground of the delay, namely, that the completion was to wait for the coming in of the Church of Christ, "That they, without us, should not be made perfect[3]."

Thus, the admission of the infant, by the Jewish rite into the covenant, if limited to this life, would have been comparatively unimportant; the true privilege of the covenant being the eternal pos-

[3] Heb. xi. 39, 40.

session. And that eternal possession was thus to be secured to an infant eight days old; (unless, on growing to maturity, his subsequent acts should make him "a cast-away;") and the rite by which he was thus secured was one administered by man; and by no other rite could the security be given. The male child remaining uncircumcised, "hath broken my covenant."

That this external act must have been always connected with a Divine one, namely, the "circumcision of the heart," is evident.—Because, nothing stained with sin can be cleansed by the mere act of man.

That this "circumcision of the heart" cleansed Original Sin, is equally evident.—Because *no* sin can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven beyond the grave.

That the human act and the Divine were inseparable, is evident from the circumstance; that if the infant died in the next moment, it would be a possessor of the glorified Canaan; while, if the Divine co-operation were to be delayed, the infant would have died unregenerate: or, if it lived, that co-operation might have been delayed for years, or for ever.

And yet, this rite, thus commanded, thus essential to immortal glory, thus the act of God, and thus conveying the most exalted of all blessings beyond the grave, was to be administered to a human creature, wholly incapable of comprehending, or even of conceiving, or of taking any voluntary share what-

ever, in the ceremonial; an infant, in the very earliest period of infancy, but eight days old!

It must also be asked, where, in this direct ordinance of God, do we find any mention of those preliminaries, of which we hear so much in our day? Where in the command do we discover the necessity of previous election, of prevenient grace, or of parental faith, for the infant?—of that election, of which man can know nothing; of that prevenient grace, of which nothing is revealed; or of that parental faith, of which nothing is demanded. We have the whole covenant of the promise distinctly laid before us, by its heavenly Author, and yet in it there is not a syllable beyond the ordinance itself.

We may well ask, who can point out the difference between the Jewish infant and the Christian? If the former was capable of receiving regeneration in extreme infancy, why not the latter?

We are also to remember the close connexion of Judæism with Christianity;—that the religion of Christ was only an expansion of the religion of Moses, freed from the burden of its ritual, and the limits of its legislation:—that the Author of both was the One God: that Christ came, not to abolish the law, but to "fulfil the law;" that, in the establishment of his Church, He adhered even to forms which might seem, to our short-sightedness, unimportant resemblances of the old; when He appointed Apostles, making their number that of

the patriarchs of the tribes; and when He sent forth the disciples to preach, making their number *seventy*, in obvious reference to the Elders, chosen by Moses at the giving of the Law[4], and followed by the Sanhedrin, established from the age succeeding the Captivity.

We find this principle pervading the whole mission of our Lord. He thus preaches in the synagogues, goes up to the great feasts, presents Himself in the Temple, makes its purification the first and last displays of his national miracles, adopts the memorial of his death from the Paschal Supper—only simplifying the form; and adopts the sign of introduction into Christianity from the sign of introduction into Judæism,—also only simplifying the form.

The principle even goes beyond his mission. We find it continued, in the command, that the Gospel should first be preached exclusively to the Jews; and that the Apostles should continue in Jerusalem, notwithstanding their personal peril, until the descent of the Holy Spirit. We find it in the descent of the Holy Spirit, on the day of giving the Law; and in the similitude even of the Apostolic commission, "Go forth, teach, and baptize," to the process of conversion by the Jew[5].

[4] Exod. xxiv.

[5] The proselyte was received with baptism, sacrifice, and circumcision. The two latter were abolished by Christianity: the

In this succession of coincidences, where is the interruption? In the Law, the baptism of the child accompanied the baptism of the proselyte parent, as a matter of course. If there had been any doubt on the subject of Christian infancy, it must have been declared by our Lord, or discussed by the Apostles:—infants were constantly before them; our Lord lays his hand on them in blessing, makes their innocence the model of his disciples, takes them in his arms, and pronounces, that "of such is the kingdom of God." Every infant round Him had been received into the Jewish Church, and was believed by every Jew to be regenerated in the act of reception, and to be thus entitled to the possession of glory with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Have we the slightest remonstrance against this belief? Our Lord had no hesitation in rectifying error, in rebuking presumption, or in enlightening the national views of immortality. Nothing could be bolder than his language to the rulers, nothing more explicit to the people, nothing more confidential to his disciples; yet, in three years and a half of this incessant outpouring of Divine wisdom, we find not a single warning against infant baptism.

Yet, the subject was one of the very highest importance; for it decided the future condition of all the infants who might die before the time of ado-

one as the sign of a covenant ended, the other of a ceremonial ceasing with the death of Christ.

lescence; and in whose instance, if regeneration were a delusion, it was a delusion which humiliated the whole national belief, from the day when the people and their children "were baptized to Moses in the cloud and the sea."

If it should be objected to the inseparability of regeneration from baptism, that it has long since been obviously separated from the Jewish rite, once equivalent to baptism; the true answer is, that the sign of the covenant of Canaan has been divinely *abolished*. It was thus abolished, at the time when John first came preaching "Baptism for the remission of sins."

The local covenant, through Abraham, was then displaced by the universal covenant, through Christ. The Jewish dispensation was thenceforth *at an end*. "The law and the prophets were *until* John."

The perseverance of the existing Jews in this sign shows nothing but the persevering infatuation of an unhappy people. Yet, it is impossible to look upon them without longing for the time when the veil shall be taken from their eyes; when Rabbinism shall cease to be their religion; and when, abandoning their fictions, they shall be taught to build on "the foundation of the prophets and apostles."

I am not about to discuss the prospects of Judæism. But it is impossible to forget, that *we* are grafts of the great olive; and that the period when its trunk, splintered by so many a thunder-stroke, shall branch

forth again, will be the period of regeneration for the world. But, fallen or risen, Judah offers the mightiest moral of the earth to man.

Of all the powerful evidences for the truth of Christianity, the most powerful is the condition of the Jewish people. From the fall of the Temple, their existence stands in direct contrast to the whole course of human things. In the midst of a world of feverish activity, of perpetual vicissitude, and of continual progress, we see a portion of mankind, standing in the same position in which it stood almost two thousand years ago, untouched by time, unshaken by vicissitude, neither crushed nor conquering, neither ruined nor restored.

A great living Anomaly! a people, yet not a nation; with a law, yet without a government; with a religion, yet without a worship; hopeless, yet not despairing; undone, yet not destroyed; exerting vast influence, yet without power; accumulating immense wealth, yet always stricken with poverty; holding all nations in scorn, yet the servant of all; sitting at the gate of imperial treasuries, yet without public rank in any country of the globe.

But, of all its characteristics, the one which most arrests the eye of the reasoner, is its resistance to change. Change is the law of the world; all life is fluctuation; yet, in the midst of that perpetual roll of living surges, one frozen pile stands up: we see in that Ocean one lonely spot,—unworn by the per-

petual currents, unshaken by the storms of ages, unvisited by vegetation, untouched by the sun, and unmoved in all the heavings of the great sea-bed of society.

Even the most resistless laws of nature are not suffered to approach this singular people. While population is pouring through its flood-gates from every part of Europe; while colonies are less a territorial aggrandizement than a national necessity; less an expansion of power than a relief of pressure; while famine, and poverty, and faction, and even crime,—all the squalid but fierce agents which shake mankind from their homes,—are in hourly action; and future kingdoms are rising from those sullen sources, round the circumference of the globe, like meteors ascending from the mists of the horizon, yet to take their places in the Galaxy, and contribute their steady illumination to man; neither fear, nor hope, nor poverty, nor adventure, has ever been able to move the Jew.

While the human race, within the last half century,—like Israel itself, when its Egyptian bondage was about to be broken,—is increasing by sudden millions, as if in the preparative for some irresistible impulse, or vast emancipation of mind; the population of Judah has probably not increased by a single birth, since the day when Hadrian ran his plough through the ruins of the Temple.

Yet, though the position and permanency of the

Jewish people have been the topics of every observer of national characteristics, I doubt whether the chief purpose of their continuance has ever come sufficiently before the general mind. In Providence there is a reason for all things; and especially for every part in the framework of the living world. Why, then, has a people, which takes no share in the movement of the great machine, been suffered to lie so long among its springs and wheels? Why has it not been fused and lost among nations, like its own Ten Tribes? Why not absorbed in the sands of that moral desert in which it has pitched its tent once more? Why has it not sunk from the sight of man, like the empires dropped into the grave, with their crowns and swords, on the great highway of change from Babylon to Rome? Why has it not, like them, forfeited its existence with its use?—Dust to dust!

It is, because it still has an involuntary use,—yet one of the highest importance, and one which could not be supplied by any other nation of the world,—its perpetual, direct, and living testimonial to Christianity!

And this is the evidence, not of solitary events, but of superhuman system, of stern circumstance, of inflexible fact, of cold realities, inscriptions on the living rock, voices of the tomb, still speaking to attest the Divine descent of every doctrine, principle, and prediction of Christianity. That a remnant, in the latter day, shall be rescued from

their hereditary blindness, is prophetic; but if this were the sole purpose of Jewish existence during the eighteen centuries since the national fall, why such a waste of that high expediency, which we never find lavished in the designs of Providence? Why might not the name have been preserved in some fragment of society, like their own Karaites; or in some border of Heathenism, like the Syrian Christians; or in the spot where the ashes of the Ten Tribes sleep under the foot of the Moslem tyrant, or the Arab robber? Why should the population meet us by thousands in every corner of the world? Why should Judæism be fixed face to face with us wherever we move? Why compel us to look upon the same immemorial lineaments, the same unchangeable pursuits, the same stern identity of prejudice, the same proximity of existence, yet, with a chasm deep as the grave between, the impassable line of demarcation between the Jew and mankind?

Who, while the Jew exists, can doubt the fulfilment of the prophecies, the preaching of the Baptist, the rejection of Christ, the divine spread of the Gospel, or the fated fall of his country? Who can doubt the anathema imprecated by his own lips? or the unexampled vengeance by which it was fulfilled? We have all the great facts of Christian history embodied in the existence of the universal exile. What but the Jew could substantiate them,—and what is wanting to their substantiation?

But, in this point of view, its purpose is perfect. Custom, tradition, and even history, may grow confused and melt down: all the forms by which man stamps the past on the present, and transmits both to the future, may perish. But here, side by side with Christianity, travels down through all ages, a living witness, perpetually in the presence of mankind, incapable of confederacy, unconscious of its service, yet, in all its hostility, giving an evidence which it is utterly impossible for rational inquiry to resist. Men *may* disregard all evidence, as men may clasp their hands on their eyes, and deny the day. But, in the continuance of that people is supplied to the world a resistless answer to infidelity. Scepticism withers within the shadow of that ghastly testimony: we might as well doubt the reality of death, with the charnel open beneath our eyes.

And this use would be well worthy of this extraordinary interference with the course of things. Christianity calls a *World* to conversion: countless millions may still be brought within its fold. The coldness and selfishness of man require to be perpetually urged to the acceptance of its truth: infidelity, if disgraced in name, is in the heart of thousands and myriads; for every man, to whom God is not all in all, is practically an infidel. But, against this sleepless fever of human perversion, and perpetual bewilderment of the human mind, an anti-

dote is provided, in the existence of Judæism, utterly invincible, in the common exercise of the understanding.

Christianity was founded on miracle. The whole mission of our Lord was marked by evidences of his power over nature and man. The change of those illustrious means, from external demonstration to internal faculty, in the mission to the Gentiles, was still but a change of miracle. When the Apostolic age passed away, and with it the Apostolic inspiration; there was to be left one great substitute, the miracle of an indestructible people! —Judæism, smote for its offence against Christ, yet maintained for its service to Christianity. Shadowy, yet strong alike against the casualties of nations and the work of time, it was appointed to remain, until it shall vanish in the rising glory of "the Kingdom."

It is true that the language of prophecy is lofty and exulting, and that the restitution of Israel is alluded to in all the images of earthly splendour; but a calmer inquiry would show that those scenes are not of this world.—Paradisaic loveliness of the Globe; life, without the troubles which belong to all human existence; eyes untouched by tears, and happiness inaccessible to change; have no relation to the sons of Earth. The creatures of original infirmity must bear their burden, until they lay it down in the grave.

For those heavenly immunities man must await "a better country, that is a heavenly." He must be an immortal in a land of immortality, the subject of an immortal throne, an heir of Christ, and "equal with the angels!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE SECOND ADVENT.

The attributes of God are unlimited in number and power. It is not inconsistent with the declared principle of Providence in this world, to conceive, that the whole universe is only a developement of those attributes, in giving happiness to the countless ranks of sentient being; nor inconsistent with its ways, to conceive that those attributes have a certain order in their developement. This at least we know, that, in our world, the two attributes especially developed, are Justice and Mercy. We know, also, that they have an order in their developement, suitable to the natural order of things; that two Dispensations have been given, succeeding each other; and that the former, the Jewish, has especially embodied the attribute of Justice; while the latter, the Christian, has especially embodied the attribute of Mercy.

The whole impress of the Jewish law is retribution

for guilt. Its original maxim is, "without shedding of blood there is no remission:" but, shedding of blood implies loss of life, for "in the blood is the life." Sacrifice is always before the eye. Even the covenant of the possession of Canaan is founded in a vision of national suffering.

In this sacred declaration, when God promises Abraham the possession, and Abraham asks, "Lord God, how shall I know that I shall inherit it?" the Divine answer is given, in a command of sacrifice; that sacrifice including all the animals usually offered: the heifer, the she-goat, the ram, the turtle-dove, and the pigeon. When the sun is going down, the vision returns; "a horror of great darkness" falls on him; and the prophecy is given: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years[1]." Then, in confirmation of the words, is shown an emblem of their Egyptian bondage. "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." The extent of the land is finally defined: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates[2]."

[1] This includes the time of their wanderings in Canaan. From the birth of Isaac to the Exodus was four hundred years.

[2] Gen. xv.

The same character extends through the whole dispensation. The Law is given "on account of transgressions;" the people are punished in the wilderness; Canaan is entered with the sword; and the corruptions of the Canaanites are punished by slaughter; the dispensation is finally sealed in the blood of the Messiah; and that consummate crime is punished by the fall of the nation.

The Second Dispensation bears the impress of Mercy from the beginning; there is no thunder from Sinai, no violent possession, no extermination of the possessors, no yoke of ordinances, no sacrificial blood. The Law has passed away: Glory to God, and peace and good-will to man, is the spirit of the Gospel.

Yet, diverse as are those two great lines of Providence, they finally converge: Judæism and Christianity meet in the Second Advent. Nothing more remarkable is to be found among all the wonder-working processes of the Divine government, than the minute similitude which has been carried down between the entire of the Jewish and Christian Dispensations, from the birth of both.

I take but a fragment of each.

Moses, with Aaron for his speaker, demands the liberation of the Jews from the house of bondage.

They lead the people through the Baptism of the Red Sea into the wilderness, with the pillar of cloud and flame, the light of Jehovah, as their guide.

The Law is given from Sinai.

The twelve explorers of Canaan are sent forth.

Aaron dies on the way to Canaan.

Moses gives his charge to Joshua, one of the explorers.

Moses sees the promised land from Mount Pisgah, but, without entering it.

Moses dies, but not by infirmity; and Joshua, with the ark, the place of the divine glory, leading the way, passes through the river Jordan; the people are baptized, and the conquest of Canaan begins.

I now observe the outline of Christianity.

John, the "Voice," first comes, to proclaim the mission of Christ, declares the release from the yoke of ordinances, and summons the Nation to Baptism.

Christ, with the Holy Spirit descending on Him, is baptized, along with the people, in the river Jordan.

Christ, by the Holy Spirit, is led up from Baptism into the wilderness.

Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, declares the new Law of Christianity.

Christ appoints the twelve apostles, and sends them forth to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.

John the Baptist dies.

Christ gives the charge to Peter, of beginning the preaching of the Gospel to the world.

Christ dies; before the Gospel has been preached

beyond Judæa; but having seen the Kingdom, from the Mount of Transfiguration.

At the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descends, the people are baptized, and the conquest of the world is begun.

When we remember, that those events of indubitable similitude were actually fifteen hundred years asunder; and that there was no discoverable necessity for their resembling each other, (since Christ might obviously have completed his mission without reference to the acts of Moses;) it is utterly impossible to doubt that they had a purpose, and the very purpose which they have effected on the minds of all sincere inquirers into scriptural truth,—a conviction of the Divine origin of Christianity.

On the subject of that final Kingdom, in which both dispensations shall combine under the sovereignty of Christ, the process might be traced with equal precision.

The promise of Canaan to Abraham embraced, as has been already observed, two conditions of Canaan, wholly distinct; the earthly possession, and the heavenly. The Kingdom of Christ similarly embraced two conditions, equally distinct; the present wide, but imperfect and struggling possession of the world by Christianity, and the future reign of glory. Neither Christ nor his Apostles ever spoke of the earth during their mission, or that of those who were to follow them, but as a scene of difficulty:

to the Apostles a place of toil and peril; to their successors, often a place of persecution; and, even at the last, exhibiting a crisis of that prolonged and dubious strife with the passions and perversions of man, in which religion will seem to be all but overwhelmed; and where Christ shall finally descend, only to see his Church in devastation, infidelity lording it over the multitude, and Himself almost a stranger. "When I come, shall I find faith upon the earth?" But his language of the second condition of the Kingdom never fails in its strength and lustre; the children of his faith are still to be the children of "his Father which is in Heaven;" all the conceptions of human magnificence are weak to the "glory that shall be revealed;" and in that House "of many mansions," the highest place of power, splendour, and happiness, is already secured for the sons of the First Resurrection.

Still, it is important in the highest degree, that, in those inquiries, we should be led by the lights of Scripture alone. Unhappily, there is no doctrine which has suffered more by the mixture of human frivolities. Its simplicity, solemnity, and truth have been seized on by imaginations frenzied with vanity, or stimulated by imposture. The glorious vision, of which the full radiance would be too bright for the mortal eye, and of which but "the skirts" can be seen, even by the spiritual gaze of the adoring Christian: has been degraded into a Mahometan paradise,

or even a scene of factious and worldly ambition; and the land of intellectual grandeur, celestial power, and angelic beauty, lies hidden in the fumes from the altar of the passions.

The heretics of every century since the Christian era, the primitive Anabaptists, the Fifth-Monarchy-men, the ancient fanatic, and the modern pretender, have thus effected all the evil that was within the means of fiction and folly. But, even where the search was sincere, *two* especial errors have hitherto been fatal to the interpretation. All the inquirers seem to have forgotten, that the kingdom of the visible throne of Christ *must* be a kingdom of immortals. This recollection would at once extinguish all their theories, or bring them back to the sobriety of Scripture. The second of those errors is, the attempt to fix the period of the Second Advent by calculation. For this vanity, Scripture furnishes no surmise whatever: we have, besides, the highest of all authorities telling us, that, of this period "knoweth no man, not even the angels."

Of the kingdom, it is only wisdom to keep silence where Scripture has forborne to speak. But the outline is clear. The actual existence of a future place of glory, as the peculiar place of the fathers of the Jewish Church, is declared in the most distinct language. When our Lord denounces the guilt of the living Jew, He tells him, that he shall be cast out from the presence of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

When He convicts the Sadducees of Scriptural ignorance, in the denial of the Resurrection, He declares Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be living at the moment; and founds on this fact his proof of the future resurrection. When He is transfigured, the later leaders of Israel are seen with Him in glory; and Moses and Elijah not only speak with Him, but speak of an event of this world, "his death, which He was to accomplish in Jerusalem."

The language of Christ to his Apostles, is that of man with man,—Galilean peasants, they were incapable of comprehending mysteries, and his words have all the plainness of reality. He tells them, that they shall "sit on twelve thrones, judging (governing) the twelve tribes;" and that He shall "drink of the fruit of the vine with them in his Father's kingdom." On the night of the last supper He tells them, "I go to prepare a place for you. . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." He tells them, that He will send the Holy Spirit to them; and the Holy Spirit is sent. He tells them that they shall be *baptized* with the Holy Spirit "not many days" after, and they are so baptized: and that they shall be his witnesses in Judæa, through all nations; and such they were. All of those declarations, which were capable of being realized at the time, were realized to the letter: why are we, then, to doubt that the rest will be realized with the same directness?

When our Lord ascends in the sight of the Apostles, two angels suddenly stand beside them, who say, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go up into Heaven." For what conceivable purpose could this ascent have been thus made visible, or those angels have been sent thus to declare, that He was to return from Heaven, *as they had seen Him ascend;* but to impress on the Apostles the actual reality and visible nature of his return? He might have passed away in a thousand conditions of form and circumstance; He might have gone invisibly, as He had gone before the Apostles into Galilee; He might have communicated his departure by a Divine voice, or by those angels alone; and the evidence would have been indubitable. But, He clearly desired to add the evidence of their own eyes, and thus give them the highest conceivable conviction of his *return in the body.*

On the personal reign of Christ there is much obscure indecision in the Christian world; a sort of sickly affectation of tenderness in the handling of truth; and a not unusual practice of that mockery of moderation, and habitual motto of indolence,—"Let time, the great interpreter, tell." But, it is the business of the honest follower of Scripture, to suffer no doctrine of the faith to be stifled in the nursing of this decorous ineptitude.

If doubt could ever have been justifiable; how much more justifiable was it in the Jew, shrinking from the idea of an Incarnate God treading his way through the world in pain and privation, and dying on a cross? than in the Christian, shrinking from his triumph? Yet, for that error, Judah was stricken for ever; its sun fell from the sky, and its footsteps were sent to wander in darkness through the world.

The subject is boundless; but I must conclude. Regeneration is the substantial virtue of Baptism. Without Regeneration, baptism loses its significance and its use: with it, Baptism is the *only* declared entrance to the Kingdom of the first Resurrection.

The belief in the Personal reign of our Lord has scarcely yet taken its true rank in religion. Of late years, though rather doubted than denied, it has existed more in the essays of the theologian, than in the living hope and intellectual conviction, which kindles the heart, and moulds the mind. Even Infidelity has scarcely yet assailed it, and it is abandoned to grave indifference.

Yet, it is this doctrine which, of all others, it will be most essential to the safety of the Church to prepare against assault; for it is here that the chief assault of Infidelity will be finally made. How many, or how few years may still be interposed between us and that tremendous period, it is not for man to tell. But the doctrine of "The Kingdom" will be the express point of trial between the true Church and the

adversary. "Where is the promise of his coming?" will be the outcry of the sceptic, echoed from a scoffing world.

It is already ominous, that Regeneration should be put forth as the *perplexity* of our time. If Infant Regeneration shall be doubted, Baptism must be degraded: if Regeneration shall be but a name, Baptism can be but a form: the day on which it sinks into a ceremonial, it perishes as a Sacrament. Where, then, shall the Church hide her head from these words, written by the hand of Inspiration before her eyes,—"Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God?"

THE END.

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